No. 309 (New Series), Vol. 6. February 19, 1938

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by Augustus MUIR

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The PASSING SHOW
No. 309. Vol. 6. FEBRUARY 19, 1938

The effect of the final card trick was ruined by Hector's holding up the four aces before Mr. Sampson had even begun to make them disappear

SLEIGHT OF HEART

Wee Hector has fun sliding down the sides of an eternal triangle, when not giving exhibitions of Highland dancing, during this lull in the erratic wanderings of blind fiddler Auld Neil

BY AUGUSTUS MUIR

ILLUSTRATED BY GAFFRON

AULD NEIL gave an impatient tug at the string that was tied to Jock's collar. The dog, who had been lagging behind, moved forward to the old fiddler's side with his tail drooping dismally between his legs.

"Jock seems in poor fettle," remarked Hector.

"Nae wonder," said Auld Neil. "He's a verra wise animal. Fine he kens how bad things hae been going!" His fingers closed upon some small change in his pocket. "We're nearly doon to our last bawbee, laddie."

"I've got tuppence o' my ain," Hector informed him, "but I was keeping it to buy sugarolly suckers to-morrow for a Saturday treat."

"Saturday treat!" Auld Neil gave an angry growl. "Ye'd hae the impidence to waste guid siller on sugarolly suckers——"

"There's sherbet in them," interrupted Hector, "and it sizzles on your tongue just grand."

"Verra bad for the stomick," declared Auld Neil. "It'll gie ye the gripes." And his anger rose again. "Flinging awa' guid siller in sweetie shops when we can hardly keep body and soul together! Ye'll hae the Lord's judgment on ye for sinful waste. Hand over the tuppence, laddie. I'll tak' the temptation out o' your way."

"I've been saving up," pleaded Hector. But when he saw the look on the old man's face, he dug dolefully into his jacket pocket.

"This is no' tuppence," said Auld Neil, staring down sternly at the copper on his outstretched hand. "Out wi' the other penny!"

"There must be a wee hole in ma pocket," muttered Hector. "I think it's got into the lining. I—I cannae find it."

"I'll hae a guid look in that jacket o' yours this nicht," said Auld Neil firmly, as they went on their way. He adjusted the *BLIND* notice that hung below his beard and pushed up the dark spectacles on his nose, for they were reaching the outskirts of the village of Langhope that lay in a valley between two ranges of brown hills. "We'll need to try and get lodgings here till to-morrow," he went on. "Yon signpost said the next village is ten miles off and we'll never manage it afore dark."

He played a few tunes on his fiddle outside a row of cottages, but without result, and they moved farther down the street, pausing by the gate of a grey stone house. A tall, elderly man with a good-natured face was approaching, and from his heels a small terrier darted forward. The man whistled and shouted, but his dog ignored him and began to cut circles round Jock, barking and growling in a determined effort to start a fight. Jock did not move; he sat stolidly upon his haunches as if he had been carved out of a block of marble.

The tall man came hurrying up. "Michty me, that's a wonderful dog ye've got, fiddler!" he exclaimed, making a swipe at his terrier with his walking-stick. "Get awa', ye wee deevil—get awa' . . ."

The terrier stopped barking and blinked at Jock in a dazed way. Here was a dog who didn't want to fight! There must be something queer about him, the terrier seemed to be thinking.

"Ay, Jock's a canny beast, sir," said Auld Neil. "He wouldnae quarrel wi' Old Nick himself."

The stranger patted Jock's shaggy head. "A real friendly dog. I could do wi' one like him fine. Better nor these yappin' wee rascals that are good for nothing except to chew your slippers to rags."

"Chew slippers!" Auld Neil gave a groan. "Poor Jock must be that hungry, I'm thinking he'd be glad to chew anything. He hasnae had a crust since seven o'clock in the morning—nor this wee laddie either."

The tall man looked down at Hector, who tried to assume a famished expression.

"Can the laddie play the fiddle too?" asked the man.

"He's learning," nodded Auld Neil, "and he's guid at the old Hieland dances. Ou, ay, a clever wee laddie."

Forgetting to maintain the hungry look, Hector beamed up at the stranger.

"Better come in and hae some tea," said the man. "I dinnae like to hear tell o' a laddie going hungry."

"Thank ye kindly, sir," said Auld Neil, in a tone of deep gratitude. "Me and Jock will just wait outside—we're more accustomed to doing without our teas."

"Na, na," protested the man. "Come in, the three o'ye. There's plenty bread and butter." He led the way round to the side of the house and paused at the back door. "Ma housekeeper will gie ye your teas in the kitchen," he said. "Mistress Brodie's a bit hard o' hearing, so ye'll need to speak up. Gie me your arm," he added to Auld Neil, "and I'll show ye the way in."

A thin little old woman was making toast at the kitchen fire. "See that the wee laddie gets a guid tea, Mistress Brodie," he shouted, "and mebby he'll dance the Hieland Fling for ye after he's finished."

"I'm sure he'll be verra pleased," said Auld Neil, accepting a chair beside the fire.

"Miss Farquharson has called," announced the housekeeper. "I thought mebby she'd like to stop, so I've set a place for her."

"Miss Farquharson! I wonder what she'll be wanting. . . ." Mr. Dugald MacBeth hurried through into the sitting-room and a dark-haired woman rose from an armchair on the hearth.

"Good evening to ye, Maister MacBeth." She held out a neatly gloved hand. "Excuse me calling at your tea-time—I thought it would be over."

"Now that ye're here, ye'd better stop," said Dugald. "I wouldnae hae the face to take ma tea wi' you sitting there looking into the fire."

"For a confirmed old bachelor," said Miss Farquharson, "you're verra hospitable. Mostly they just please themselves."

"There's a lot to be said for being a bachelor," nodded Mr. MacBeth. "Ye can do just what ye

(*please turn over*)

like, without a wife's tongue blattering at ye when ye come in wi' muddy boots. . . . But tak' your place Miss Farquharson. Here's Mistress Brodie wi' the tea and toast."

"It's not everybody that has thae bitter hard views on matrimony," said Miss Farquharson, primly, after the sitting-room door had been closed. "Me being an old friend of yours, I thought mebby I could come to ye for a word o' advice. As ye know, I'm giving up my dressmaking business in the village."

"Ay, I've heard that," nodded Mr. MacBeth.

"And what with a bit legacy I've had frae an aunt in Glasgow, I'm no' just so badly off."

"I've heard that, too," he admitted. "I havenae had a chance o' congratulating you——"

"Listen to me, Dugald MacBeth! I'm speaking in strict confidence. If ever there was a body that could keep his tongue between his teeth, it's you—so I'm trusting ye no' to repeat this to a living soul. I've had an offer o' marriage."

"Michty me!" Mr. MacBeth paused with his tea-cup halfway to his mouth.

"Is that anything to be surprised at?" demanded Miss Farquharson, sharply.

Dugald MacBeth coughed. "Na, na," he said hastily, with a glance at her pleasant face and neat figure. "You're a well set-up body, Janet Farquharson, and any man that wants to get married could easy pick a worse wife. Are ye—are ye accepting the offer?"

"The fact is," said Miss Farquharson, with a tinge of pride in her voice, "I've had two offers."

Mr. MacBeth spluttered. "A fair epidemic o' proposals—" he began. "Have ye made up your mind who it's to be?"

"That's just it," replied Miss Farquharson. "D'ye think it can be ma siller they're after?"

"Like enough!" nodded Dugald MacBeth, then corrected himself quickly. "Na, I didnae mean that. Ye see, Janet, I'm in a deeficulty, because I dinnae ken the names o' the men that have asked ye."

"One o' them is Ben Sampson, the grocer."

Mr. MacBeth raised his eyebrows, then took a gulp of tea. "And a verra respectable man. Ay, he'll make a guid husband. He's had plenty o' experience, him having two wives already in the kirkyard—and it's a fine grocery business he's got. Who's the other?"

"Maister Linkwood."

"Hoppy Linkwood!" exclaimed Mr. MacBeth. "Ay, ay; a clever wee man. I bought a pair o' boots frae his shop last week and the squeak's out of them already."

"Does he no' strike you as a wee bit crafty?" inquired Miss Farquharson, earnestly.

"Ah, he's a verra careful man wi' the siller—but none the worse o' that. Ye'll no' find him extraivagant. I hope ye'll not stop him from coming along for a wee drap whisky at the Langhope Arms on Friday nights. It's not more than one dram he ever takes, unless somebody else pays for it."

"Me—stop him?" repeated Miss Farquharson. "I havenae accepted him yet. That's what I've come to ask ye about. Which is the best one to pick—him or Ben Sampson?"

Mr. MacBeth rubbed his chin doubtfully. "It's a verra deeficult problem. If I recommended one afore the other, and it turned out badly, I'm thinking ye'd gie me many a sour look frae the choir seats on a Sabbath evening."

"After I'm married," said Miss Farquharson, proudly, "I'll sit wi' my husband doon in the body o' the kirk."

For the rest of the meal their talk did not flow quite so freely as usual. Dugald seemed to be silently pondering the merits of the two suitors; and when Miss Farquharson was bidding him good night in the hall, she turned with a little start and stood listening. From the direction of the kitchen there came the scrape of a fiddle.

"What's that?" she inquired.

"It's just an old man and a wee laddie I asked in for their teas—they seemed hungry. . . . Look there!" He led Miss Farquharson a few paces along the passage.

The kitchen door stood ajar and a small kilted figure was dancing the Highland Fling in his stocking soles. Mr. MacBeth's aged housekeeper was watching the boy with a rapt smile on her wrinkled face.

"The very ticket!" exclaimed Miss Farquharson. "He'll do just grand."

"For what?" Mr. MacBeth was puzzled.

"For the social to-morrow night. You're verra slow in the uptake. It's to be held in th village hall, and I'm seeing to the arrangements."

"And ye mean, this wee laddie——"

"Ay! One of the singers has gone doon wi' a sore throat, and this wee kiltie could do some dances instead."

"But—but they're just tramps off the road. The Lord kens where they'll be by to-morrow nicht."

"They'll be here," said Miss Farquharson, "even though I have to find them lodgings in the village myself!" She smiled sweetly. "But I think I can leave that to you, Dugald MacBeth—ye'll no' refuse help to an old friend like me." And shaking hands, she hurried down the garden path.

Mr. MacBeth scratched his head, then made his way reluctantly into the kitchen.

"Ye've got a soople pair o' legs, laddie," he said as Hector's dance came to an end. "How would ye like to dance at the village social to-morrow nicht? There's to be tea and cookies."

Hector beamed his assent, but Auld Neil shook his head sadly. "We'd be glad to oblige ye, sir, but we've got no place to bide till then. We're just poor wandering bodies."

Dugald MacBeth glanced at his housekeeper. "Mebby Mistress Brodie could make ye up a bed on a sofa—there's a wee room behind the kitchen. Ye could set out on your travels again the next morning."

"That would be the Sabbath," said Auld Neil in a doubtful tone. "I wouldnae like to break the Lord's day."

Mr. MacBeth's jaw dropped. "I hadnae thought o' that. Na, ye cannae break the Lord's day. I wouldnae like to turn ye out on the Sabbath, me being an elder of the kirk. Ye'd better wait till Monday."

Behind his dark glasses, Auld Neil's eyes twinkled. With a low bow, he was about to express his gratitude, but his host cut him short. "Ye've to thank Miss Farquharson—no' me."

"Janet Farquharson!" In the sitting-room Mr. MacBeth sat hunched over the fire. He was obviously thinking over the problem she had put to him; and that evening in the Langhope Arms, as he sipped a small tot of whisky and hot water, he ran his eye critically over Mr. Ben Sampson and then looked across at Hoppy Linkwood. Mr. Linkwood caught sight of him and came over.

"Evening, Dugald! How are the boots?"

"Fine. Ye sell a guid pair o' boots, Hoppy Linkwood."

"Best value in Scotland," Hoppy assured him. "Finish your drink, Dugald, and hae a wee drap wi' me."

Dugald MacBeth looked surprised, but later Mr. Linkwood became confidential. "You're an old friend o' Miss Janet Farquharson," he said, lowering his voice. "I hope ye'll put in a good word for me in that quarter. The truth is, Dugald," he continued, "I've got a fancy for the lady—and if you speak for me, she micht consent to become Mistress Linkwood."

"A verra suitable match," commented Dugald MacBeth and added discreetly: "Hae ye kind o' popped the question yet?"

The kitchen door stood ajar and a small kilted figure was dancing the Highland Fling in his stockings. Mr. MacBeth's housekeeper was watching the boy with a rapt smile on her wrinkled face. "The very ticket!" exclaimed Miss Farquharson. "He'll do just grand"

"Aweel, in a sort o' way. She likes me, Dugald; I can see that. She asked me to help her at the village social to-morrow nicht—I'm to give my magic-lantern show. Coloured views o' Lands Beyond the Sea."

"Fine," said Mr. MacBeth. "They're old favourites—I've seen them five times maself."

"But I'm told," went on Hoppy Linkwood, "that she's asked Ben Sampson to help too. He's been practising sleight o' hand for the last few months, and he's to gie a conjuring show." Hoppy snorted. "Ben Sampson didnae need to practise sleight o' hand—he's verra guid at it wi' yon grocery scales o' his."

"I heard ye were helping him to practise his conjuring tricks," remarked Mr. MacBeth, "you two being such guid friends."

"I've finished wi' him!" said Hoppy Linkwood, decisively. "We've had words. Ay, I'll admit it was about Miss Farquharson. He's got an eye on her." He leaned closer. "But you can put things richt for me—I'm relying on you. Ye'll hae another wee drap? . . . No? Then I'll be slipping awa' hame."

Mr. MacBeth himself was preparing to leave when Ben Sampson slapped him on the back. "How's Dugald?" he said heartily. "I saw Hoppy Linkwood talking to ye just now. A poor bit creetur o' a man. Him and his magic lantern!" He spoke behind his hand. "He's been perking up to Janet Farquharson, no less. He thinks he has a chance wi' her, but he'll find out his mistake. . . . Ye'll hae another dram, Dugald? . . . No? Aweel, see here. You and me is old cronies and I hae reason to believe Miss Farquharson considers ye a man o' commonsense. Next time ye happen to see her, just tell her your high opinion o' me, and I'll be obliged."

"Anything to help an old friend," responded Dugald, as Ben Sampson shook him heartily by the hand. "I'm sure I wish ye good luck wi' the lady o' your choice. She'll make a grand managing wife for any man that's misguided enough to get married."

When he got home, Dugald MacBeth wrote down two names with a pencil and dropped the pieces of paper into a hat. He stood for a long time in thought, then with a sudden gesture of exasperation he threw them both into the fire and went slowly upstairs to bed.

Never in all their travels had Hector and Auld Neil struck such comfortable quarters; and next afternoon Miss Farquharson took the boy down to the bootmaker's shop to get a pair of dancing slippers.

"Ye'll never manage with thae heavy brogues," she had said when she saw the thick soles of his shoes; "I'll gie ye the dancing slippers as a wee present."

Mr. Hoppy Linkwood had the very thing and he promised to have shiny buckles fitted if Hector would wait for half an hour. The boy thanked Miss Farquharson in his politest manner and she departed, leaving him to chat with Mr. Linkwood while the buckles were being adjusted.

But he was there in the shop much longer than half an hour. To Auld Neil's surprise, he did not return for tea. "Nae doubt he's getting his tea with some kind-like body," decided the fiddler, and he dismissed the matter from his mind, for he had an important job of his own on hand. He had taken a walk along the village street with Jock that morning, and at the door of the grocer's shop had fallen into talk with Mr. Sampson. "Slip along in the evening," Ben Sampson had said, "and come to the side door. Dinnae let dab about this to anybody. . . . I want ye to help me with something, and ye'll be well rewarded."

When Auld Neil rapped gently on the side door in the gathering dusk, Ben Sampson led him into a back room.

"It's about thae conjuring tricks I'm to do at the social to-night," he said, confidentially. "I wouldnae like to trust any of the Langhope folk. I need somebody in the audience to be a confederate, and a local body would blab about it afterwards. Now, you're a stranger, and you've got an honest face."

"I'm as honest as my face, Maister Sampson," said Auld Neil, solemnly. "Any wee bit help I can gie. . . ."

"I was just wondering about you being blind," said Mr. Sampson, shrewdly. "Ye can find your way about wonderful well. Ye can see a wee bit, eh?"

"A kind o' glimmer," admitted Auld Neil. "Whiles I can see better than others."

"Ay, exactly—it all depends! Aweel, when I ask for the help o' somebody in the audience to-night, you've to hurry to the platform. I'm afraid Hoppy Linkwood will try to jump up and spoil ma tricks, so ye'll need to be quick. Ye see this pack o' cards?"

"I'm no' expected to keep cards up ma sleeve?" quavered Auld Neil. "My fingers is all thumbs."

"Not at all—it's verra simple. Just sit down and I'll gie ye your instructions. Before the show starts, I'll slip ye over a wee rabbit to keep in your coat pocket until the time comes. I drop a rabbit into a hat, ye understand, and then shout, "Presto" and it's transferred to your pocket like magic."

"But it'll be a different rabbit," protested Auld Neil.

"Ay, but you're the only one who will ken that. Now here's another trick ye'll help me with. . . ."

Three-quarters of an hour later he was patting Auld Neil on the back at the side door. "It's five bob for ye afterwards," he whispered. "I'm doing this for the lady I'll soon be engaged to and I want to put up a guid show."

"Ye mean Miss Farquharson?" said Auld Neil. "A nice kind pleasant body, and I'm sure I wish ye both many years o' happiness . . ."

When he got back to the kitchen at Mr. MacBeth's lodgings he found Hector admiring his new pair of dancing slippers.

"Where hae ye been, laddie?" demanded the fiddler.

"Ou, I had ma tea wi' Maister Linkwood. Look at ma grand slippers. He's a verra nice man—he's going to get married to Miss Farquharson."

"Nae such thing!" cried Auld Neil. "If yon Maister Linkwood told ye that, he was havering. It's Maister Sampson the grocer that's to marry her."

"We'll see," said Hector, darkly; and, although Auld Neil looked keenly at him, he could not gather what was passing through the boy's mind.

But there were others beside Hector and Auld

(*please turn over*)

Neil who held differing views on that subject. From casual talks on the street, Dugald MacBeth learned that the village was divided into two camps. Some were backing Mr. Sampson as the lucky man; others thought Hoppy Linkwood had the better chance.

As the hour of the social approached, the tension increased. It was felt that to-night something would happen which would put one or other of Miss Farquharson's suitors decisively ahead; and if the minister had known the number of small wagers that were taken, he would undoubtedly have laid aside the sermon he had prepared for the following day and would have preached one on the evils of gambling.

Mr. MacBeth met Miss Farquharson on his way to the village hall, and when she casually said that she hoped Mr. Sampson's conjuring tricks would be a great success, he came to the conclusion that Hoppy Linkwood's stock had fallen several points. However, as Dugald MacBeth was to take the chair at the social, he felt that he must maintain a strict impartiality.

In his opening remarks to the audience, he touched upon the good work Miss Farquharson was doing in the village of Langhope. "As everybody in this hall knows, she has organised this social for us," he said. "She's a grand organiser—and if ever she thinks o' getting married, she'll make a guid wife for . . ." Dugald paused during a hush of expectancy, " . . . for any man that has the guid fortune to win her heart, and hand!"

A thunder of applause and laughter broke out, and it was noticed that both Mr. Sampson and Hoppy Linkwood were doing their best to look at ease. But in Mr. Sampson's eye there was a glint of triumph. Dugald MacBeth noticed that look and he wondered if his guess were correct.

After the tea-things had been cleared from the long trestle tables, the concert began. Auld Neil had left Jock tied up in a room behind the platform, and he sat in a corner with Hector. But presently the boy slipped away to the front and settled down in a chair beside Miss Farquharson.

"I've put ye down rather late in the programme," she whispered, as a song came to an end. "Ye'll no' get sleepy?"

"No' me!" declared Hector. "I've had a grand tea——"

He broke off and looked round anxiously. His friend Hoppy Linkwood had lit the big magic lantern, and the lights in the hall were being turned down.

"There's something wrong," muttered Miss Farquharson, sniffing. "There's a queer smell."

Other people were remarking on it, and a slide of Venice by Moonlight was merely a dark brown blob on the screen.

"Slip back and ask him what's wrong," whispered Miss Farquharson urgently, and Hector made his way down the hall.

"Quick, laddie—pull this slide out!" gasped Hoppy Linkwood. "Take ma hankie—it's hot . . ."

But Hector was too late. There was a splintering of glass, and Venice by Moonlight went into a dozen fragments. Black fumes were rising from the magic lantern and people were coughing and clearing their throats. Presently, the lights were turned up and the atmosphere in the hall was thick with pungent smoke. Old ladies held handkerchiefs to their noses and one of them was already tottering towards the door.

Some wag observed that Hoppy's magic lantern resembled Vesuvius by Moonlight, and with a cry of dismay Hoppy snatched it from the stand and dashed out with it into the open air, plunging it into a horse trough to extinguish the flames that were now pouring from the top. Hector caught sight of a broad smile on the face of Mr. Ben Sampson as he sauntered forward.

"What's gone wrong, Hoppy?" he asked, sardonically, and then he slapped his knee. "Dod, I've got it! When ye sent along to ma shop for some lantern oil, I must have made a mistake. I'm thinking I must have sent ye camphorated oil for rubbing on the chest."

Hoppy was shaking his fists. "Ye did it on purpose!"

"Na, na," said Mr. Sampson, coolly. "I was just in a hurry. Pity ye had such a bad cold in the heid, or ye might have smelt the difference . . ." He turned away. "I'll be getting awa' in to the concert—that's the Chairman announcing some more songs."

"Ay, he did it on purpose!" said Mr. Linkwood to Hector, in a hoarse whisper, "but he doesnae ken what's coming to *him*!"

"Leave him to me!" And in the darkness, beside the sizzling magic lantern in the trough, Hector gave a knowing wink.

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"Ladies and gentlemen . . ." It was the voice of Mr. Dugald MacBeth from the chair, and he was announcing the conjuring entertainment to be given by someone who needed no introduction to the folk of Langhope; someone whose van called on Tuesdays and Fridays in the outlying districts, and who sent up many a good wood on the Langhope bowling-green—in short, three cheers for Maister Ben Sampson.

The curtain which had been drawn across the platform was swept aside. Mr. Sampson acknowledged the applause with a confident smile and proceeded to roll up his sleeves. Ben had never lacked a gift of the gab, as everyone was bound to acknowledge, and his opening patter came glibly from his tongue. Already everyone was pitying Hoppy Linkwood, who sat with bowed head at the back of the hall. Ben Sampson's star was certainly in the ascendant, and Mr. MacBeth noted the happy smile that was playing round Miss Farquharson's pretty lips.

" . . . and so, ladies and gentlemen, since there will be nae jookery-pawkery in these feats of mine, I will ask some member o' the audience to kindly step up on the platform to assist me. To show he is not a confederate, I do not want any Langhope body. There's an old man at the end of yon row—he's a stranger and he'll do verra well. I see he's blind, so that'll prove——"

But the words were taken out of his mouth by the shrill piping of a boy's voice. "I'll help ye, sir!" cried Hector, climbing nimbly up on the platform.

Mr. Sampson scowled. "Na, na—I don't want a laddie. Get down——"

"But I would like to help ye, Maister," pleaded Hector. "I'll hold everything verra careful."

"Ay, let the wee kiltie help!" cried a voice from the audience, and a unanimous cheer backed up this request. Mr. Sampson tried to speak, but his words were drowned in the clapping, and somebody suggested tersely that he might as well get on with his show. Quick to realise that the atmosphere of goodwill he had established between himself and his audience was in danger of being broken, Ben Sampson bowed and smiled.

"I don't suppose ye ken one caird from another, laddie," he said, patronisingly, to Hector.

"But I'm quick at counting the dots," nodded the boy.

"Nae back-answers!" muttered Ben, angrily, below his breath, and he displayed a pack of cards. "Perhaps I should explain to ma learned assistant, ladies and gentlemen, that this is the ace o' hearts."

"And here's another awful like it!" remarked Hector, swiftly extracting a card from Ben's side-pocket.

The audience tittered. "He's too quick for ye, Ben!" cried someone as Mr. Sampson was hastily reshuffling the cards. His next few tricks, which he performed without the help of Hector, went very well and were duly applauded. But when he asked the boy to hold a bowler hat and stand at the opposite end of the platform, the effect of his final card-trick was ruined by Hector's pulling aside the false lining and holding up four aces before Mr. Sampson had even begun to make them disappear into the crown of his own head.

"I'll murder ye, ye brat!" The conjuror spoke the words in so low a whisper that only the boy heard them, and he whispered back: "I'll try to do better."

But unfortunately, in the next trick, something went wrong with a large cabinet. When Ben Sampson opened the door to show that Hector had magically disappeared, there waddled out a white duck which should not have made its appearance until the next trick, and Hector stepped round from behind with his hand over his mouth to conceal a broad grin.

When Mr. Ben Sampson tried to borrow a watch from the audience, and nobody seemed anxious to comply, he pulled the silver hunter from his own pocket and tossed it into a hat, which he asked Hector to hold high above his head. He did not see Hector's hand go into the hat, for he was too busy with another portion of the trick which held the attention of the audience, and then he took the watch from the hat.

Using a pestle and mortar, he pounded it to pieces, poured the tiny wheels and battered metal into a muslin bag, which he removed from sight. And then, with a little swagger, he walked across the platform to the boy, who was still holding the hat high in the air, and pulled out a watch. But his gasp of horror could be heard at the other end of the hall.

"Michty, I've smashed up my guid watch!"

Among the laughter that followed, there was a scream of mirth that rose above the rest. It was the voice of Hoppy Linkwood.

"The next trick, ladies and gentlemen . . ." Ben's face had gone white, but he managed to pull himself together and twist his lips into a wry smile. "Ay, the next trick. As my assistant is verra weak, and I need somebody wi' more bulk, I will ask yon old blind gentleman to come forward. This way, please. You sit down over there, laddie." Since his back was turned to the audience, Mr. Sampson permitted himself to reveal his feelings with a scowl which sent a little shiver along Hector's spine.

Auld Neil was helped up. He took his place at one end of the platform; and Mr. Sampson held up a dish containing, as he said, a nice rabbit-pie. In a burst of applause, he mysteriously produced from it a live and kicking rabbit. While he was making this disappear in a breath-taking way, and producing it again, Hector could hear a faint scratching on a door at the back of the platform. Then there was a whimper, and he knew it came from Jock.

His eye twinkled. For Jock to come into the picture was certainly not part of his arrangement with Mr. Hoppy Linkwood, but it was too good a chance to be missed. Slipping from his chair, Hector opened the door.

"Now watch this verra carefully, ladies and gentlemen. . . ." All eyes were focused upon Mr. Sampson, who was holding up the rabbit and making mysterious passes over it. From Jock at the door there came a yelp of joy, and like an arrow he shot across the platform.

"Eh, michty. . . ."

Ben Sampson's speech ended in a gasp. He dropped the rabbit, and it leapt from the platform, tearing down the centre aisle of the hall.

Jock was about to follow, but he caught sight of Auld Neil. From the fiddler's capacious pocket another rabbit was struggling to escape. Auld Neil made a grab, but it was too late. The rabbit cut a swift circle round the dazed conjuror and plunged recklessly down among the audience, with the big shaggy dog close behind. Several chairs were overturned; a lady began to scream; and then pandemonium broke loose.

Hector was in time to see Mr. Sampson bearing down upon him. The man's face was a reddish purple with rage, and in his hand was a heavy stick. Dodging him, Hector slipped through the door at the back of the platform; and twenty minutes later, he was stealing up to Mr. Hoppy Linkwood who stood alone in the darkness outside the hall.

"That went off fine, eh?" said the boy with a chuckle. "I gave ye your half-crown's worth——"

But Hoppy Linkwood responded with a ringing cuff on the ear. "It's no' half a crown ye'll get from me! I told ye to make a fool o' his tricks—not to smash everything up! Look what ye've done." He pointed through a lighted window into a small room at the back. "She's sympathising wi' him—look!"

Hector stared. Ben Sampson sat hunched up in dejection, while Miss Farquharson was bending tenderly over him. She was patting his shoulder and was obviously speaking words of comfort.

"It's finished ma chances!" groaned Hoppy Linkwood, and with another burst of anger he raised his hand to smite again.

When Hector reached Mr. Dugald MacBeth's house, he found Auld Neil sitting dismally with Jock in front of the kitchen fire. The man looked up, but did not speak.

The corners of Hector's mouth drooped. "Maister Hoppy Linkwood promised me half a crown to make a fool o' the conjuring tricks, but I got kind o' carried away. . . ."

Auld Neil groaned. "Ay, it's a bonny pickle! Maister Sampson asked me to be his confederate in the audience." He shook his head. "Why did ye no tell me, laddie? We've been working in opposition—and a fine mess we've made. I wouldnae be surprised if Maister MacBeth turns us out o' the house this nicht. . . ."

But Dugald MacBeth did not come home until after eleven o'clock, and he came stumping straight into the kitchen.

"Why all this air o' gloom?" he cried, cheerfully. "Bring out the seed cake for the wee laddie, Mistress Brodie, and gie Auld Neil a drap o' whisky. I've got guid news! Miss Farquharson has changed her mind about a certain two gentlemen in this village."

"And she's decided no' to get married at all?" Auld Neil nodded. "A verra wise lady."

"Ye're wrong!" burst out Dugald MacBeth. "We've just arranged it. A month from to-day, I'm to marry her maself!"

Mrs. Wise-Woman Wospottle decided it was time that Mr. Ablett learned his lesson when he turned Widder Tump out of Marigolds cottage

BY S. L. BENSUSAN

ILLUSTRATED BY W. J. TURNER

MARIGOLDS

Mr. Ablett, passing the scene of her activities, inveighed vigorously against this spoliation

"YOU'LL have to go," said Mr. Noah Ablett, hard-mouthed, coarse-tongued land speculator and defiler of countryside, to Widder Tump, a month after she had qualified for the sad description.

"You don't wanter turn a widder outer house an' home," replied Mrs. Tump, indignantly. "You ain' no call to do that, bein' I lived here afore ever you come to these parts, an' me husban' ain't hardly laid in his cawfin, you brute, you."

"I'm mos'ly bound to have th' house," retorted Mr. Ablett, indifferently, "bein' I got to house a man what's comin' from Rumbridge to work f'r me. He gotter wife an' three child'en, an' you live alone by y'rself an' got five rooms. But there, I'll gi'e ye a fortnight to clear out."

Just as though Widder Tump had been marked out for good fortune, Mrs. Bly's married daughter, who lives somewhere near Lunnon, moved into a new house about this time and withdrew her mother from the Almshouse. Mrs. Tump was nominated at once for the vacancy and, on her behalf Mrs. Bly's rooms were repainted, papered and whitewashed.

These proceedings took time and annoyed Mr. Ablett, who applied to the court, to receive nothing better for his wasted morning than an order calling upon Widder Tump to give up possession within twenty-eight days. She would have gone without complaint in a fortnight but, having what she called "extry time like," took it and dug up all the best plants and gave them to neighbours; she is quite an active woman still and can garden with the best.

Mr. Ablett, passing the scene of her activities, inveighed vigorously against this spoliation, but Marigolds, as the cottage is called, lies in a group of small homes administered by resolute Marshland ladies who have nothing to expect from Mr. Ablett. They arrived quickly to take part in an encounter from which Mr. Ablett retired as soon as possible, not without hearing a little about the measure of esteem in which he is held.

Then Mrs. Tump visited her nephew Mr. Cant, the carpenter, and in happy hour, for he was quite sober and undertook a little commission for three shillings, including material, "being you're me aunt an' all," he explained. "Didn't (i.e., if you hadn't been) I'd ha' bin mos'ly bound to ast ye five."

He called on two evenings, did some digging in a part of the garden indicated by his aunt, drank a cup of cocoa without enthusiasm and retired, as he had arrived, under cover of darkness.

Another friend of Widder Tump is Mrs. Wospottle, Marshland's Wise Woman, also a widow though never so described. She took tea at Marigolds when Mr. Ablett, having been reminded by the man from Rumbridge that he expected his money from the date of his agreement without reference to delays unfortunate or otherwise, intruded again, hoping to intimidate the widow. He left his loud two-seater by the side of a meadow a couple of hundred yards away, that it might not betray him and he stalked into the cottage, without even knocking at the door, to find Mrs. Martha Wospottle sharing a "dish of tea" with the lady who was outstaying her welcome.

"Now, Widder," he said, ignoring Mrs. Wospottle, "I want you outer th' place come Saturd'y. I got me man comin' down to start o' Monday."

"When Widder Tump goo out of Marigolds," interposed the Wise Woman suddenly, "your troubles 'll begin, Noah Ablett, don't you doubt it."

"Bin star-gazin' agen?" he snarled. "I don't think nawthen to ye. If you had y'r desarts you'd be in th' hosspond; that's th' place f'r witches."

"Wait an' see who git to th' hosspond first, Noah Ablett," replied Mrs. Wospottle, contemptuously, "an' now git outside, or I'll call Maggie's nybers. You can't come breakin' inter people's housen, Noah Ablett, an' well you know it. Git yo out d'reckly minit. And don't gimme no back answers," she added fiercely, "or I'll take me words o' power to ye an' you'll larn what a bed o' sickness is like."

There was something striking in the tall figure of the Wise Woman who had risen from the table and was pointing to him with hand outstretched. His voice shook a little as he turned to Mrs. Tump, speaking in a tone intended to be friendly. "Git out o' here by Saturday an' I'll send a cart to take y'r things to th' Almshouse, an' I on't charge ye."

"Saturd'y fortnit's me time," replied Mrs. Tump, feeling more than ever courageous, "an' not a day before."

"There's time twixt then an' now f'r you to find a peck o' trouble, like you did time you come interferin' along o' Tod Mole," added the Wise Woman, referring to one of Mr. Ablett's most notorious setbacks. He flushed and the veins seemed to stand out on his forehead as he gathered words together for evil speech. Then something chilled his ardour and without a word he slunk from the room and made his way back to the field for his car and found, as soon as he had run it on to the road, that one tyre was flat. The tread was well worn and a nail had pierced it. The mishap was quite normal, but Mr. Ablett, behind the facade of truculence and foul language, is a nervous, superstitious man who, had he known that Mrs. Wospottle was on the far side of Widder Tump's front door, would never have ventured past it.

At Marigolds nothing happened until the night before the widow retired to the Almshouses, when Mr. Cant, sober and active, completed his job in the garden and took the cocoa with what appetite he could. Mr. Ablett did not lend the van that moved the furniture, that arrived at ten o'clock with two men and Mrs. Dunnock who "turns people out," though not in a literal sense. They worked hard, sweeping and scrubbing with such goodwill, that, a fine day aiding, the cottage looked clean as well as clear when the large van arrived from Rumbridge at six o'clock on the sunny summer afternoon.

One of the men stayed to help Mr. Gaylor and his wife to unpack, the van driver lent ample aid and when the middle-June sun went home, the place was sufficiently in order to be habitable. But Mrs. Gaylor's comment was not of the complimentary order and her husband spent part of the Sunday morning making a critical survey of the thatch, the ceilings and the lean-to washhouse.

Then the many works on which Mr. Ablett is engaged absorbed Mr. Gaylor's capacities, the summer slipped away and the newcomer proved himself well worth his modest wage. though Mr. Ablett did not forget to remember that he had been compelled to pay three weeks' money for nothing. He had encountered Mrs. Wospottle twice and on each occasion he had reminded her that the new tenants were happy and comfortable. On the first occasion Mrs. Wospottle vouchsafed no reply; on the second she turned on Mr. Ablett. "Your trouble's coming right enough Noah Ablett, I passed it time I come along the road on'y yesterday arternoon," and Mr. Ablett's heart sought to find contemporary refuge in the heels of his boots, though he tried to appear quite at ease.

Two days later the weather broke after a long drought. For nearly 48 hours the downpour was incessant and Mr. Gaylor and Mr. Ablett had words. The latter declared, truly enough, that he knew nothing about Marigolds being subject to flooding in bad weather and having made brief inspection, he sent a wagon and conveyed Mr. and Mrs. Gaylor and family to an army hut near his yard, while proceeding to set the crooked straight. The water had risen through the scullery and kitchen floors as though there were an active spring nearby.

Old Mr. Pant who knows the district remembered "as how Bob Tump should ha' towd me onst that he used to have trouble along o' th' water time that rined, but he got the master of it. Happen Widder Tump kin tell ye how, if so be she's minded" he concluded and Mr. Ablett, not quite forgetful of the past, called on Mrs. Tump at the Almshouses by appointment, sending one of his men to say that Mr. Ablett would call on the following afternoon and hoped to find her at home, being it was important.

He was disturbed to find Mrs. Wospottle in the little living-room. "That Master Ablett bin called to tell ye everything's jest so at Marigolds, Maggie,"

(*please turn to page* 12)

she said, maliciously, when Mr. Ablett's ugly head and squat body were past the door.

"The water's come in at Marigolds, Widder," he said, ignoring the Wise Woman, "and old Charley Pant tells me it used to trouble you and that your husband got the better on't."

"That's a true word," admitted Widder Tump, complacently. "He wore a master, wore my Bob. He got a head an' he got brines in it, an' he got arms an' a nice pair o' han's at th' end on 'em."

"What did he do?" inquired Mr. Ablett.

"He minded his own business," replied Widder Tump, "jest as I'm a gooin' to do." And, as we say in Marshland, "she glouted wunnerful at that Master Ablett."

Mr. Ablett retired hurriedly, his superstitious nature deeply stirred. The postman was coming up to his office as he reached it, with a few letters. The first that Mr. Ablett read was from the surveyor's office of the Rural District Council. It was curt and minatory.

"Sir, I am instructed by the Rural District Council to inform you that I have inspected Marigolds Cottage, your property on the Maychester-Nutting Road, and to instruct you to effect the following repairs forthwith as the house is not fit for human habitation and must not be so used."

Here followed a schedule of dilapidation calculated to shock even a builder and it was not signed by Mr. Ablett's friend, Mr. Stubbing, who would never have sent out such a letter, but by a young and ardent subordinate who was acting for a chief on leave of absence following illness. Clearly, the subordinate was lacking in tact, judgment and discretion. Moreover, it was obvious, from the discreet inquiry Mr. Ablett instituted at once, that the deputy had been to Marigolds when part of the garden and all the ground floor were under water. There was no saying who had sent for him.

"Come in, Noah Ablett" cried the Wise Woman, from her seat at the top of the table in the kitchen that serves her as consulting-room. The land defiler who had approached Mrs. Wospottle's cottage furtively and with considerable hesitation, was shocked and startled to realise that she can see through two closed doors. It was not really quite so bad as that. 'Lijah Wospottle who is his mother's Intelligence Department, had watched his movements and warned his parent.

"Sit you down, man," commanded the Wise Woman, as she poured something from the jar before her into a cup and pushed it towards him. "A dose of me herbs o' healin' 'll steady y'r narves an' as you're ashaimed o' y'rself I shan't charge ye more'n a shilling f'r it. Don't leave any or I can't help ye."

"What kin I do to get things right, along o'Marigolds," cried Mr. Ablett, eventually. "That'll cost a fortune to float all that place in concrete an' if old Bob Tump could cure it——"

"Bein' I larnt him," interposed Mrs. Wospottle, boldly and mendaciously, "pore Bob was helpless as a baby."

"What'd that cost me?" inquired Mr. Ablett, "to get things set to rights."

"I gotter ask me planet if I may," replied the Wise Woman, "that bin looking at ye very old-fashioned Noah Ablett, an' I count it want to do you a mischief. But I'll make me enquirations. This here's Tuesday. Come along o' Thursday an' don't speak a word to a sowl. I've knowed people who talked too much fall down in a fit," she added significantly, for Mr. Ablett is not only very heavy but his neck is short and excitement flushes his face. Mrs. Wospottle has not practised healing for nearly half a century without some knowledge of physical make-up and its indications, but she did not know that only a month previously Mr. Ablett had been warned off the most of his meat and nearly all his alcohol on account of high blood pressure.

"Do y'r best f'r me, Martha," gasped Mr. Ablett, producing a ten shilling note and putting it on the table. In his agitation he had been unable to hide from the sharp eyes before him the existence in his note-case of larger and better paper. Mrs. Wospottle looked through him as though she had never seen the offering. Then she turned to the mantelshelf to mark the calendar and Mr. Ablett rectified his error; something in him recognised it. Turning round, the lady's claw-like hand picked up the pound note.

"If there's anybody kin do anything f'r ye, Noah Ablett," she said, with dignity, "Martha Wospottle's th' one," and she watched him without so much as a quiver of an eyelid as he slunk out.

It may be doubted whether she consulted her planet for the night was cold and windy and the kitchen was very comfortable, but on the following day she called on Mr. Cant and held him in a close conversation, in the course of which she spoke of discretion and a four and a half gallon of fine ale as though they were horses that run in double harness. Then she went back to her home and thence to the Hard, where she purchased one of Mr. Spitty's special Dundee cakes and proceeded to the Almshouses and presented the cake to the Widow Tump and took tea and conversed intimately. Then she dismissed the matter of Marigolds from her mind until Thursday, when the last applicant for herbs of healing was disposed of by a quarter to nine.

"I've had to fight f'r ye, Noah Ablett," declared the Wise Woman, a little later, "there ain't a many 'd ha' done it. Marigolds was only the beginning; it was to bin you next, if I hadn't bin an' come along." And Mr. Ablett weakened by his recent abstentions and sensible of the loss of vigour had no doubts left. For all his pride he was down and out, and he knew that the Wise Woman knew it.

"Noah Ablett," declared Mrs. Wospottle, "that'll cost ye twenty pun to save Marigolds."

"I'll p'y," said the land defiler.

"I've set a charm round it," continued his mentor, "and don't you, ne yet anybody else, go nigh it till arter the full moon. Do, you on't come away from it—except it's on a stretcher. Then they'll take ye to Market Waldron f'r twelve men to set on ye."

"I'll remember," cried Mr. Ablett, aghast.

"I must have ten poun' to-morrow an' ten time the water's drained off," declared Mrs. Wospottle.

The charm set by Mrs. Wospottle had no ill effect upon Mr. Cant, who in the week following, after Mrs. Wospottle had received the first part of her fee, drew the plugs from the drains that Bob Tump had drawn so artfully that when floods came the water drained into a nearby ditch. The work had taken him many months, but he had done it after the fashion of old-time drainers, and being secretive only his wife knew how they could be handled.

She told Mrs. Wospottle, also directed Mr. Cant, a sound workman when sober and a man who believes that the Wise Woman is all she pretends to be. He thinks, too, that a four and a half gallon cask of beer is a satisfactory price for silence, particularly when a Wise Woman has recalled for his benefit cases of men who opened their mouths "when they hadn't oughter" and "went off dead sudden like."

A MAN AND HIS COUPONS

By A. C. BARRETT

IN REVERSE

SHORT SHORT STORY
of two men who found that two other men were so alike they got very dizzy indeed sorting them out

BY TANJONG

ILLUSTRATED BY GRAHAM SIMMONS

They watched every action closely until he finished his meal and lit a cigarette; he struck the match with his left hand

AS Summerhay made his way to his accustomed table, Merowitz, the broad-shouldered man with a beard, seated at the far side of the restaurant, touched his companion on the elbow and without any perceptible movement of his lips, said, "That is he."

Stoffel, his companion, lifted his ferret eyes for a split second and then returned to marking apparently meaningless lines on the cloth with his thumbnail. "Is he always alone?" he asked.

"Invariably. He reads all the time he is eating and takes not the slightest notice of anyone else in the place. See, he has opened his book. Now is your opportunity to have a good look at him; it is quite safe."

"It is not necessary," replied Stoffel. "I have looked once and I could draw every line of his face. See this." He added a few rapid strokes to those already on the cloth and produced a perfect portrait.

"He is left-handed and walks with a slight limp, probably due to an old knee injury. He is polyglot and extraordinarily keen sighted."

"And yet he is using a reading-glass."

"But not to read with. That glass is platinized and serves as a mirror in which, by turning it at different angles, he can study every face in this room. Ah, and something else." He suddenly looked straight at Summerhay and formed an inaudible word with his mouth. Summerhay turned and gave him a sharp glance, then returned to his reading.

"I thought so," murmured Stoffel, bending his head once more. "He is an expert lip-reader."

"What was it you said?" asked Merowitz.

"A word which anyone might use in the ordinary course of conversation, but it happens to be the key-word of his code for the day."

"Risky."

"He'll probably put it down to coincidence."

As they watched, another man entered the restaurant. Without hesitation he walked straight to Summerhay's table and after a word of conversation handed him a letter. Summerhay read it, then put a match to it and held it in his fingers until it was reduced to ashes, which he dropped on his plate and crushed to powder with a fork.

"Who is that?" asked Stoffel, when the newcomer had gone.

"His servant, Rogers; another Englishman."

"That is obvious, but he is more than a servant, he is a bodyguard; with a clever facial disguise they would be interchangeable, but for one thing."

"What is that?"

"You noticed that the servant is essentially right-handed in his actions and no matter how carefully he practised the left-handed habit there would be occasions when he would forget himself, such as in striking a match."

"What do you imagine was so urgent in that letter that it should be delivered to him while he was still dining?" asked Morowitz.

"Undoubtedly instructions for his immediate departure and that means that if we are to get those papers from him, we must act at once."

"I have arranged for all that," said Merowitz. "If he goes by air there will be a forced landing; if he goes by car he will be held up by bandits and if he goes by rail we shall be on the same train, to arrange a little incident which will involve his arrest and search the moment he crosses our frontier."

The following morning Merowitz was sitting in the hotel lounge when Stoffel came in from the street. "He leaves by train to-night," said Stoffel quietly, as he dropped into a chair beside his fellow conspirator.

"Good," said Merowitz, "I'm going to wire to our police to meet us at the frontier. You stay here and see if you can get a sight of Summerhay."

Half an hour later Merowitz returned. "Has anything happened?" he asked.

"Yes," said Stoffel. "Ten minutes ago Summerhay came down disguised as Rogers. It was very cleverly done, in fact, almost perfect, but there was just one thing that gave him away; when he went to that telephone booth he took a message and wrote it on the pad and he wrote it with his left hand. That clinches it, I think?"

Merowitz nodded. "We meet at the station at half-past six," he said. "In the meantime, try and find out what the real Rogers intends to do. He is hardly likely to stay on here, he would be bound to make a mistake which would give his disguise away."

They met at the station a quarter of an hour before the train was due to leave and chose a spot in the shadow from where they could see every passenger coming on to the platform. Five minutes later the other two arrived, the supposed Summerhay leading and "Rogers" following with a suitcase which he placed in the train and then returned to where his "master" was standing, which, fortunately for the watchers, was near a lamp that shone full on their faces.

"Incredible!" murmured Merowitz. "Are you sure you're not mistaken?"

"Listen and judge for yourself," was Stoffel's reply.

"Rogers," climbed into the train and a minute later Merowitz and Stoffel followed him and went to their own compartment.

"DOES that convince you?" asked Stoffel, as the train pulled out of the station.

"Not at all," was Merowitz's answer. "The man who just boarded this train might be either Summerhay in disguise, or Rogers."

Stoffel gave an impatient exclamation. "Very well, then. When he goes into the dining-car we'll follow and observe his actions. If he is left-handed it is Summerhay, if he is right-handed, it is Rogers. Do you agree?"

Merowitz assented and when dinner was announced they watched the corridor until they saw their man pass along, then after a short interval they followed to the restaurant car and took a table immediately behind him.

Each table was divided from the next by high-backed seats which screened any direct view of the occupants of the adjoining table, but by bending forward it was possible to see the reflection of one's neighbour in the mirrors on the opposite side of the car.

"See!" exclaimed Merowitz, presently. "He holds his knife in his right hand."

"No, his left," said Stoffel. "Don't forget that it is reversed in the reflection."

"Ah, of course," Merowitz admitted.

They watched every action closely until he finished his meal and lit a cigarette; he struck the match with his left hand.

"Are you satisfied?" asked Stoffel.

"Perfectly," replied Merowitz.

Three hours later the train stopped at the frontier station and Merowitz sprang out to meet the waiting police. In a few hurried words he explained the situation and then led the way to where "Rogers" was preparing to go to bed. "Rogers" looked up in surprise as Merowitz and Stoffel, followed by the police, invaded the compartment, but Merowitz cut short his questions with: "I believe I have the honour of addressing Mr. Robert Summerhay?"

"You're mistaken," was the answer. "I'm James Rogers, his servant. Here are my papers."

Merowitz examined them with a cynical smile. Then he said: "If you are really the person described in these papers you will have no objection to a search?"

"Go ahead," replied Rogers calmly.

A quick search of his luggage and pockets produced nothing incriminating, but Merowitz hadn't finished; he called for a damp towel which he passed over the suspect's face and then attempted to peel off the side-whiskers. Both complexion and whiskers remained undisturbed and Merowitz looked annoyed.

"So you are Rogers?" he said.

"That is what I said," was the reply.

"Then where is your master?" snapped Merowitz.

Rogers glanced at his watch. "He should be half-way to Paris by now," he said. "He arranged to leave by air-taxi at nine o'clock exactly."

"A thousand devils!" cried Merowitz, flinging the papers on the bunk in a rage. "He's fooled us after all." And he stalked out of the carriage, followed by Stoffel.

"This is your fault, you blundering fool!" he hissed, turning on his companion.

"You were just as convinced as I was," retorted Stoffel. "You saw what I saw in the mirror, didn't you?"

Merowitz shook his head in perplexity.

Suddenly Stoffel grabbed him by the arm and dragged him into the restaurant car. One glance at the walls and then he burst into uncontrollable laughter. "We're both blundering fools," he cried. "See, there are mirrors on both sides; we were looking at the reflection of a reflection!"

A Swashbuckling New Longshanks Adventure

MRS. SERGEANT MAJOR

Of all the adventures into which fate has lured Longshanks and the good Father Francis, their encounter with a female sergeant major is probably the most surprising

BY FRANCIS FOSTER

ILLUSTRATED BY L. G. ILLINGWORTH

At last we were there. Excited voices greeted us. Then there was an exclamation

"IT is," I told myself sleepily, "an exceedingly pleasant thing to sit on the driving seat of a caravan and meander along a country lane."

Longshanks, sitting beside me holding the reins and puffing contentedly at his pipe, was humming in his throat a plaintive melody. The steady clip-clop of our horse's hooves, the rumble of wheels on the road, the rhythmic creak that came, I suppose, from a bucket slung beneath the vehicle and swaying with the even motion and, above all, the warmth of the blankets which I had tucked round myself, filled me with peace. I fell into a doze.

Because I was not properly asleep I dreamed a little, but of what I dreamed I cannot say, for I was in a much too blissful state to take much notice; but after a while it seemed to me that the tempo of the combined sounds which had lulled me into slumber had somehow changed. It was slower.

I half-opened my eyes, but sleep pulled me back. Indeed, the more leisurely motion of our caravan would have had the effect of plunging me into profound repose but that an exclamation from Longshanks awakened me. I sat up.

In the centre of the road and but three yards ahead, was the oddest figure I had seen for many a day. It was of a woman. She wore a queer bonnet that piled on her head like a cottage loaf and a dress that narrowed alarmingly at the waist and billowed out below; and she carried her umbrella in hands that were, I supposed, crossed in front of her, so that the handle was against her left shoulder. From under her bonnet protruded a large, hard "bun." And this good lady stumped along that darkling road as purposefully as ever guardsman trod the barrack square. But she was much shorter than the shortest guardsman.

The sight was so comical that I regret to say I sniggered. But Longshanks evidently thought her no laughing matter.

"She's holding us up," he complained. "We've slowed down a lot. And we're in somewhat of a hurry.'

"You'd better call to her," I said.

Instead, to attract her attention, he coughed loudly.

The lady did not even turn her head but continued to stump along in the middle of the road.

"It's a pity we haven't a motor horn or a bicycle bell," I said. "However, there's no reason why you shouldn't shout, Longshanks."

"Why *me*?" he demanded.

"Well, you're justified," I said. "After all, she's in the way."

"Why don't *you* shout?" he suggested.

"Your voice is louder than mine," I said. "Besides, I've been to sleep."

"Don't be an ass, Father," he bade me. "What's that to do with the matter?"

"I mean, you saw her first. Indeed, Longshanks you ought to have shouted long ago, for we mustn't be late. Perhaps, however, you didn't want to wake me up."

"Let's both cough together," he suggested. "Maybe she'll hear that."

Wherefore we both coughed very loudly. Indeed, I coughed so hard that I hurt my throat and went on coughing, but the military lady in front neither looked round, nor stepped to one side.

"Now come along, Longshanks," I said briskly. "If you're afraid to shout at her, I suggest that you get down and go and ask her if she'd mind letting us pass."

We argued about this for some time, for Longshanks seemed to think that I should do what was necessary, but at length he jumped down from the moving caravan and went forward. He raised his shapeless hat politely and said something to the woman.

She turned her head towards him and I saw that she wore pince-nez on the end of a nose that was pudgy and tip-tilted.

"GO AWAY!" she boomed at him.

The volume of voice from such a small person dumbfounded me. Poor Longshanks hastily retreated and climbed up into the caravan again. He said no word. His hand shook somewhat as he took the reins from me. I could not help chuckling at his discomfiture.

Five minutes passed and I began to fidget.

"Let us light the lamps," I suggested—for darkness was near full come.

I unhitched the lamp on my side of the caravan and searched for matches. In silence, Longshanks did likewise on his side of the caravan. Then we put the lighted lamps back. They threw but little radiance, but we could see the obstructive woman quite plainly.

"What time did you say that meeting was?" Longshanks asked me suddenly.

"Six o'clock," I answered.

"We shan't be at Dossett till seven at this rate," he observed. "*I* don't mind, of course. If you do, you'd better do something about it."

Well, in the end, after much argument—and only because I never like to be unpunctual—I descended from the moving caravan and went forward to the lady. I felt that she could not possibly treat me as she had done Longshanks—she had probably taken him for a tramp; and no wonder!—but I was not a little apprehensive, nevertheless, for I am always at a disadvantage where women are concerned.

"Excuse me, Madam," I said, with as good a bow

as walking would permit. "I fear you are—er—obstructing our caravan. Would——?"

"How dare you talk to me?" she boomed.

The violence of her remark made my heart thud, but I was a little angry too; wherefore I would not be thus summarily dismissed.

"I'm sorry," I said, "but we want to get past."

"Get past then," she thundered deeply.

"But we can't while——"

"GO AWAY!" she stormed, so violently that her pince-nez wobbled on her nose.

And so defeated, I went back. Longshanks was chuckling heartlessly.

"Perhaps if you get Ephraim up close enough to her she'd be frightened and move aside," I suggested, presently.

But Ephraim had no intention of going nearer the lady. He did not like her; that was plain.

How long this painful progress might have continued I do not know but as we rounded a bend I saw the lights of the village, and just afterwards we came to a side road into which the martial figure of our advance guard turned. Longshanks at once chirruped to Ephraim, who broke into a lumbering trot. The lady did not even deign to turn to look at us.

About three hours later—the meeting I had to attend being over—we were sitting in the bar-parlour of the Poor Man's Burden Inn, eating our supper of bread and cheese. On a settle opposite sat a young labourer, who was sucking moodily at an empty pipe and staring into the fire.

Presently the door opened and a large man with cross-eyes entered.

"'Evening, Jim," he greeted the melancholy one.

"Evening, gents," he said to us.

He called for a pint of ale and turned to Jim.

"Goin' to try one?" he invited.

"Nope," Jim answered, miserably. He rose to his feet. "Goin' 'ome. 'Night."

He went wearily out of the inn.

"Jim seems upset about something," Longshanks observed to Cross-eyes.

"'Tis on'y nat'ral," quoth the latter and took a deep draught from his mug. "'E be in love, an' 'e a'n't got no 'opes."

"Won't she have anything to do with him?" Longshanks asked.

"'Tidn't that," said the big man, sitting down. "'Tis 'er ma. She 'ates the Doves—that's Jim's fambly—like pisen, she do. The Balchins and the Doves ave alwis 'ated each other and, though she be only a Balchin by marriage, like, she's wuss nor any of 'em."

"Family feud, eh?" I said.

"It goes back generations, don't it, Silas?" remarked the landlord to Cross-eyes, leaning over the bar.

"Ay, that it do," Silas agreed. "There a'n't no sense in a Dove a courtin'a Balchin. Young Jim be praaper daft to think on it."

"Young Nellie Balchin be a purty wench," the landlord observed. "An' young Jim be a tidy feller. They do say, too, that she be main sweet on 'im."

"'Ta'n't no good 'er being sweet on a Dove," grunted Silas. "Not no manner o' good, it a'n't. The ol' woman won't let 'er 'ave no truck wi' any o' they."

"D'you mean her mother?" Longshanks asked.

"Sure-*lye*," Silas answered. He spat with unerring aim into the fire; then he winked at the landlord. "The Sergeant-major," he chuckled.

The landlord laughed too. "That's wot we calls Mrs. Balchin," he explained to us.

"I think we must have met her," I remarked, reminiscently, and narrated how our caravan had been obstructed on the road by the military-looking woman.

Silas and the landlord roared with mirth. "That's 'er," said the latter, in huge delight. "She be a wunnerful woman. Thinks a lot of 'erself, too. Come down in the world, she says she is; an' I shouldn't be surprised if tidn't true."

The door opened and a policeman came in, shaking the rain off his cape.

"Hullo, Mr. Dolittle!" the landlord greeted him. "Wot be 'ee doin' over 'ere. 'As Silas bin poachin' again?" he added, facetiously, nodding his head towards the big, cross-eyed man.

"'Evenin', Mr. Winterbottom," the constable answered. "No, I a'n't after Silas this time. There's a flood warnin' come through. 'As George Trumble got 'is cattle out, d'you know?"

"No, they're in," the landlord answered. "Tom Noble told un about the rain at Crabstock, an' 'e fetched 'em in right away."

"Let's see," said the policeman, "who——? Yes; thank 'ee. I will 'ave a pint—who lives in that cottage next the Doves nowadays?"

"Mast' Trumble's cowman, Tom 'Ickey," the landlord said.

"'E'll know about the danger, then, seein' as 'ow George Trumble must 'a' told him. D'you think 'e'd warn the others?"

"I 'spect 'e'd warn Frank Dove—any'ow, young Jim Dove were in 'ere not long since, and 'e 'eard Tom Noble tell me about——"

"Then there's old Mrs. Steadman at Holly Tree. There a'n't no one else along that way, is there?"

"No, that's all," the landlord agreed.

"Well, if I warn Mrs. Steadman, that's all I need do," the policeman said.

"Is it as dangerous as all that?" I asked, in some wonder.

"It is and it isn't, sir, if you know what I mean," said the policeman. "Them 'ouses alwis gets the water in the lower rooms when the river do rise; but this year it's diff'rent because there's bin a bit of a landslide lower down and some of it went into the river. You see 'ow 'tis; if the water can't get away it'll flood."

"I 'adn't thought about that there landslide, Mr. Dolittle," the landlord exclaimed, his face showing alarm.

"Ah, we 'as to think of all them things in the Force," the policeman stated, largely. He drained his mug and set it down. "Well, I must get along," he said.

He paused by the door.

"About old Mrs. Steadman," he said. "She can't stay at Holly Tree. Could you 'ave 'er 'ere, Mr. Winterbottom?"

"Sure-*lye*," answered the landlord at once. "These 'ere gents," indicating Longshanks and myself, "are stayin' 'ere fer the night, but I 'spects we can find room fer the ol' woman. Bring 'er along 'ere, Mr. Dolittle."

About an hour later, when the rain seemed to have abated somewhat, I suggested to Longshanks that we should explore the place a little. He agreed. We went out into the wet, therefore, and got our waterproofs from the caravan in the yard.

The night was not dark despite the rain, for behind the clouds was a moon near the full, and the countryside lay in a wan light. We went some way down the road towards where we knew the river lay.

Presently we came to a church—and, a little lower down the road, the first of the flood water. It seemed that we could go no farther.

"It's not much use prowling about in the dark," Longshanks said. "We don't know our way anywhere."

We turned back, therefore. When we drew level with the church I caught the sound of movement under the lych gate and stopped. Dimly I could see the form of a man, who was evidently sheltering there.

"How far is the river from here?" I called out, going nearer the gate.

Then I saw that two people were sheltering there and one of them was a woman.

"About a quarter of a mile," a voice answered me.

I recognised it at once. It was Jim Dove's. I guessed that the woman was the "sergeant-major's" daughter, Nellie Balchin.

I did not want to seem to intrude. I took Longshanks' arm, therefore, and urged him away from the lych gate. Presently I told him about the couple, but apparently he had seen them and also he had recognised the voice.

"We'd better go back to the inn," he said. "We can't do anything, can we?"

I was very worried. Remembering that young Dove's family lived alongside the river, I wondered whether he knew of the danger they were in. Surely he must know that the river had already overflowed; he could, if he looked, actually see it from the lych gate.

In our room back at the inn I tried to straighten things out in my mind, what time Longshanks went to the stables and attended to Ephraim. I told myself reassuringly that I was a stranger to the place and that I must necessarily know considerably less of the possible danger than any of the inhabitants did. I should make a fool of myself if I interfered.

Then I heard voices outside and someone knocked at the front door. Presently Longshanks came into the room.

"The old lady from the river—Mrs. Steadman—has just been brought here by the policeman," he said. "So she's safe."

"Longshanks," I said earnestly, "something tells me that——" I broke off.

"Are you worrying about the Doves?" he asked.

I nodded. "They've been left to a chance warning," I said.

"I've been worrying about them, too," Longshanks confessed. "But what can we do? After all, these people know more about these things than we do."

We sat down on our beds. Longshanks began to fill his pipe.

(*please turn to page* 20)

These pubs of yours were bought while Mr. Lloyd George was Premier in 1916, and nearly all have been rebuilt since, such as the old "Black Lion," picture on right, and as it stands to-day in the picture below

THOSE PUBS YOU OWN

Even if you want to, you cannot get away from the fact that *you* own some of the most up-to-date "pubs" in the country. You didn't know? Well, read this . . .

BY DAPHNE CLARE

"WHAT'LL you have, Joe?"
"Mine's a bitter, thanks."
"Two bitters please, Mary."
It was nearly three o'clock and they were the only customers left having a "final" before closing time. A pretty girl in a spotless white overall pushed the drinks over to them. She was brisk and businesslike and immediately got on again with the job of cleaning up and leaving things shipshape behind the bar, ready for the evening.

And what was I doing on a Friday afternoon in the "Horse and Farrier," at Raffles in Cumberland? Well, strictly between ourselves, just snooping around a bit to see how you treat customers in these pubs of yours in Carlisle.

Did that give you a shock? Yes, you own them all right—181 of them. Have done for 21 years. The Home Office runs them for you. And a nice tidy bit they've made for you. Still, I must admit you've done the public well. Carlisle people know it, too, and are not afraid to say so.

I talked to them in a dozen or so different spots in the city and surrounding country. Everywhere they said the same thing. No praise was too high for the way the houses are run, and always there was a good word for the managers. Many of them have been in their jobs for years and are personalities in their own districts.

Take the "Horse and Farrier," for instance. Up now for nine years, but looking, both inside and out, as bright and new as if it had been built only a twelvemonth, Raffles people are still proud of it.

One of the older inhabitants pointed out to me the spot across the way where the old "pub" used to be.

"Jolly good it was, too, as pubs go," he said. "Perhaps a bit small. But this new one, why it's champion—as good as a clubhouse."

So, indeed it is. A country clubhouse with its well kept garden and smooth bowling green. Sitting in a pretty loggia, you can watch the matches in summer and have a drink at the same time.

There are cosy fireplaces to gather round in winter. Small patterned chintz curtains at lattice windows give a country cottage air and two or three bright railway posters make framed pictures for the walls. Small tables and chairs are scattered about the bar, offering a friendly invitation to sit down and have a comfortable chat with your drinks.

In the smoking-room where you pay saloon bar prices, the oak panelled walls have been polished to a dull sheen with nine years of furniture cream and elbow grease. The tiled modern fireplace with its shining steel grate, and the oak furniture that matches the walls, give it the air of a rather large, comfortable sitting-room in a private house.

The man who presides over this spotless, cheerful, homely inn began life as a miner in Maryport, but he has been managing inns for the Government now for seventeen years. Mr. Gibbons looks in his middle thirties. Clean cut and sturdy, friendly without being talkative, he is the kind of man who creates an atmosphere in which work seems to get itself done automatically without fuss and bother. His wife, neat as a new pin to match him, is a cheerful, smiling, rosy woman to whom work is a pleasure.

Both of them take as much pride in keeping the place spick and span as if it were their own.

After I had expressed my surprise and admiration, Mr. Gibbons invited me to look behind the bar and to go down into the cellar. Every bit of woodwork—shelves for glasses, drawers, cupboards—is scrubbed as white as a bread board. Every bit of brass gleams as though it had been polished just five minutes ago.

The cellar, too, is as spotless as the rest of the premises and there is fresh paint everywhere. Floor scrupulously scrubbed. Plenty of light. And the brass taps for the beer barrels look, after nine years, as new as if they had come fresh from the foundry.

"I clean them every week, myself," said Mr. Gibbons.

Proudly Mrs. Gibbons showed me their own flat above the public rooms. Five rooms overlooking the garden and country beyond; entirely self-contained with a bathroom, electric light and constant hot water.

Also, on the verge of the country, is the "Rose and Crown" at Upperby where there is a housing estate. Except for the traditional "sign" it might be a very attractive private residence.

The garden was laid out by a landscape gardener, as, indeed, are the grounds attached to every inn under the state management, and the lawns and flower beds are kept in order by a gardener who comes once a fortnight.

Here you will find the same scrupulous cleanliness. Brass gleaming, woodwork scrubbed white. In the bar the walls are covered with tiles designed in a pattern of rose and crown. Blue and white are the colours. They are expensive in the first place, but there is no maintenance. All they need is a wash down.

One of the rooms overlooks the garden on two sides, and this has been made an attractive tea-room. There are snowy cloths on the tables and teas are served as readily as drinks.

The manager, a tall, lean man, somewhere in middle age, comes from Maryport also. Local people will tell you how, as a young man, the first "house" he was given to manage, when he started working for the government, was the same "pub" his mother had run for 30 years.

When I asked Mr. Blackburn how it happened he said: "My mother was left a widow with four youngsters and, to make a living for herself and us, she took over this public house. For thirty years she ran it and then retired. I grew up there, but as a young man was restless and went to the United States.

"I did very well out there until, when war broke

Above are pictures of the old "Cumberland Hotel," exterior and interior, before it was redesigned and rebuilt. Below you see how it stands to-day

out, I joined up and went to France. After the war, I settled down in Maryport again. And that is how I came to be given the very same house to manage that I had grown up in as a boy. Strange, wasn't it?"

A different type of inn is the "Green Bank" at Charleton, which is a real village pub; small, simple, but homely and attractive just the same. Spotless, too, like the others. Yet when I complimented him on it, Mr. Moffatt, the manager, apologetically pointed out some microscopic dirt (which I couldn't see) on a beam across the ceiling and explained that it was its turn next for "a good scrub down."

This little pub has a pretty garden, just like a cottage garden, a mass of flowers. It is the pride and joy of his wife who looks after it herself and refuses scornfully the help of a regular gardener. She knows the catalogue name of every plant growing there and it is crowded. And her show piece is a rare cactus blooming only once in twenty-five years. Yes, she has seen it flower!

No use your asking me the name. I did not see her when I visited "Green Bank" because she had gone to Carlisle to do her week's shopping and her husband confessed laughingly that he could never remember it.

As you go round Carlisle (down street after street) you never see an advertisement for beer or spirits. Every licence except three, belongs to the government. The "pubs" have nothing to point them out as such, except the name, seldom displayed flauntingly, and the manager's name over the door.

Never are they conspicuous. The most elaborate look like elegant private houses, and even the humblest are never vulgar, but have about them a quiet dignity.

They were bought while Mr. Lloyd George was Prime Minister in 1916. At that time thousands of men had been brought to Carlisle to work in munition factories. Away from home with extra money to spend and very little in the way of recreation to spend it on, they got rowdy. The position became so serious that the government decided to take control of the liquor trade in the locality.

The result has been such a success that our state-owned "pubs" are now models for the world to copy. In fact, people visit them from all parts of the world.

And all the way along they have made a profit. They have put back into the Exchequer all the capital that was spent on acquiring them. Nearly half a million has been spent on improving them, and over and above that they have paid as high a dividend as any privately owned brewery.

Behind the whole scheme there is a fine ideal—to make the ordinary public house where the ordinary man goes to buy his pint of beer, not merely a drinking booth.

The Home Office has, very creditably, set itself out to raise the whole standard; make them places where the ordinary man will find some beauty; where, as far as possible, he will be able to enjoy wholesome recreation, and where he is encouraged to buy food as well as beer; and tea and coffee and mineral waters instead of it. To bear out this policy managers are paid a salary that is not affected by the amount of alcoholic beverages they sell. But they *are* paid a commission on the sale of mineral waters.

That these inns have such a high standard of beauty is due to Mr. Harry Redfern, the architect who designed them all. Some have been rebuilt on the old sites. Some have been reconditioned. And sometimes new sites altogether have been bought.

In the process of reconstruction the actual number of licences has been reduced from 300 to 181. Yet the public are adequately served; in fact, better served.

Every inn is different. Every inn has its own, quite distinct, personality. This has been achieved not only by carefully designing the outsides of the buildings but also by bestowing time and care and infinite thought, on the interiors.

This the architect has done, choosing the furnishings and decorations meticulously, down to the smallest details—to produce perfect harmony in the effect. "No use having a grand outside and then falling down over the interior," he says.

See how carefully he carries that out.

Just take a look at The Crescent Inn, one of the largest and most elaborate in the middle of the town. Its design is after the style of the Moorish architecture in Spain. The outside is white marble with an ornamental receding balcony, the ironwork hand-wrought by a blacksmith in Sussex.

Inside, a sweeping marble staircase from a central hall leads to the rooms on the first floor. The ceilings are hand painted in a decorative design and the walls are adorned with highly-glazed tiles in rich colourings that are used as motifs. These tiles are genuine medieval Moorish, plucked from the walls of some mosque hundreds of years ago. Mr. Redfern found them in the possession of a collector whom he persuaded to part with them. There are no more like them.

In the old days the "Cumberland" was just another inn. But when I came to it I felt as if I were going through the door, back into the sixteenth century, to some old Tudor inn. Stained glass windows, oak panelling, with quotations from Omar Khayyám, Robert Burns and G. K. Chesterton over the chimneypieces.

A contrast is the "Earl Grey" which is entirely modern. "Just to show them we can do it if we want to," says the architect. Full of chromium and tube furniture, it is astoundingly comfortable and restful!

Here the smoking-room is panelled in polished walnut and although it has been built for two years *there is not a scratch on it*. I don't know the people who use that inn, but they have proved by their behaviour that they know how to take care of beautiful things.

Everything has been carefully designed to fit in with the scheme, even down to the match strikers specially made of chromium on little blocks of polished walnut standing on the tables.

In the ordinary way they would be fixed to the walls but the architect said, "Don't you dare put a nail or screw into that walnut." So special match strikers were made.

The doors leading into this inn are plain sheets of chromium with a reflection like a mirror. It is amusing to stand and watch the people going in. Automatically they stop (especially the women,) take a look at themselves, straighten their hats and generally give themselves a titivating before going in. You have to live up to a "pub" like that.

Mr. Redfern has now come to be considered *the* authority on designing inns and has, in fact, designed a few in other parts of the country owned by private firms.

You can't run public houses without beer, and so a state-owned brewery is part of the scheme. Here you can see the shining copper cauldron where the wort is made; the bags of hops kept in cold storage until they are wanted; the inverted sugar in drums which looks like thick honey and tastes like candy and the enormous copper vessels where the yeast is added and left to ferment.

When the brew is ready, the yeast is skimmed off and then compressed to a crumbly dough to be used again for the next brew. Mechanical washers scrub the barrels inside and out, giving 24 gallons of boiling water to every barrel.

Then there is the spirit store with its enormous piebald vats holding over a thousand gallons of whisky each. Here spirits are blended and wines of all kinds stored; upwards of £30,000 worth, to say nothing of the raw spirit maturing in bond.

In another part of the town there are the maltings where barley is turned into malt for the brewery. So the enterprise is entirely self-contained, even to a works department for repairs and renovations.

Nearly a thousand workers are employed in all branches. They belong to their unions and any complaints about wages, hours or conditions, are discussed by the unions with the general manager.

This high standard of efficiency has been built up by Mr. A. E. Mitchel, general manager. He is first and foremost very human; kindly and sympathetic in the way he deals with those under him, and an enthusiast where his work is concerned.

In ten years he has built up a co-operation from his staff that is amazing. Nobody can be engaged or sacked without his final consent, but he lets the managers choose their own staff and backs their choice if he possibly can.

In every inn I wandered into casually, I found the same perfect cleanliness. And I found, too, the managers taking much more than an ordinary pride in their job. They have that feeling because they know they have behind them a general manager who will back them up when necessary, who appreciates their fine work and doesn't forget to tell them so, and remembers that they are human beings doing, sometimes, a very difficult job.

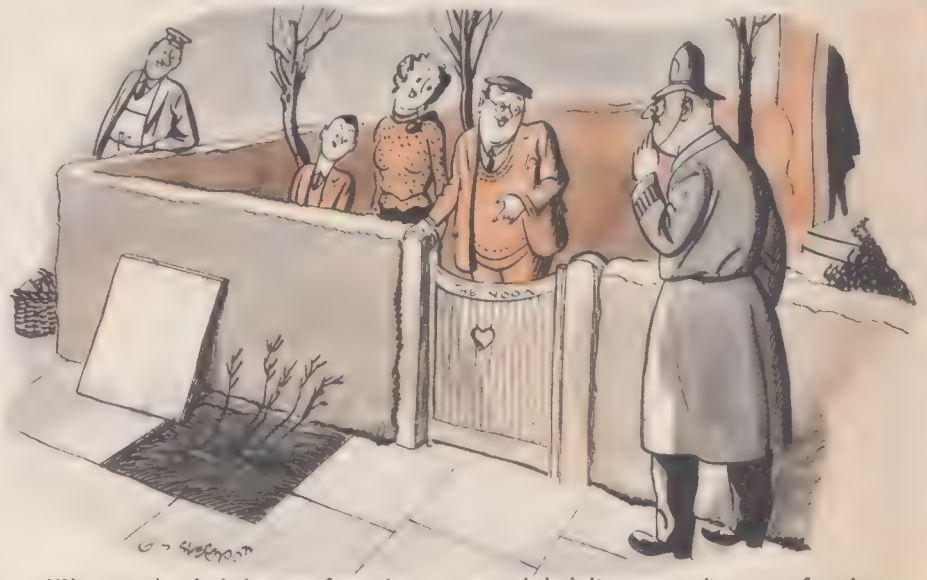
Laugh

The "PASSING SHOW

The fly fisherman becomes a darts enthusiast

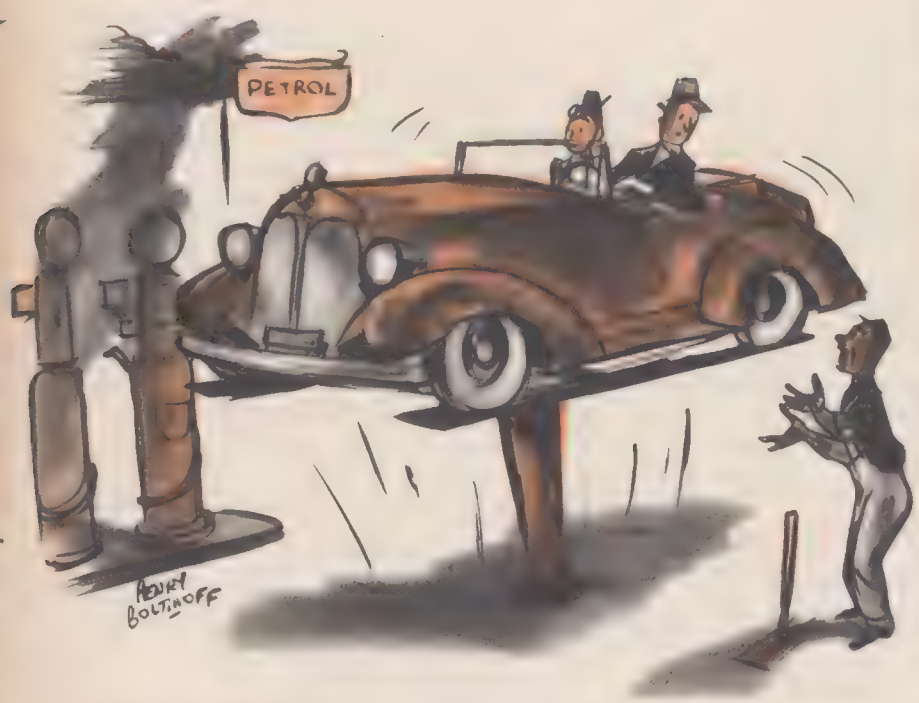
"Don't stand gawping—get me out of this"

"Will you tell the gentleman from Canada that his beaver's got loose?"



"I've just heeled them in for a day or two while I dig my garden over for the winter"

...kter
...ow" Smile Section



"I know you only want petrol, but lots of cars drive off without paying"

"He found a book on fretwork on one of the wrecks"

"Yes, Wilkins, you've dressed the window very nicely, but how are you going to get back into the shop?"

"It's the chief's idea; he's having the braves taught woodcraft!"

MRS. SERGEANT MAJOR

(Continued from page 15)

"Oh, well," I said, "I suppose we might as well go to bed."

I seemed scarcely to have fallen asleep when I was awakened by the clangour of a bell. Longshanks, already awake, was lighting the candle.

The throbbing note of the bell came unceasingly. It carried a message of danger—of that I could have no doubt.

I got out of bed and joined Longshanks at the window. The rain had stopped. Moonlight flooded the land. The land? Beyond the road was water as far as we could see!

Lights appeared in houses along the road. Windows were opened and people put their heads out. And still the noise of the bell continued.

Longshanks and I dressed hurriedly and went downstairs, where we found the landlord, Mr. Winterbottom.

"That's the church bell," he told us, and no sooner had he spoken than the clangour ceased. A deathly stillness hung over the village, though the noise of the bell still rang in my ears.

People were abroad now. I saw the big cross-eyed man, Silas. And then I saw the "sergeant-major"! She wore her bonnet and her odd dress, but she had left her umbrella at home, apparently.

"The people by the river," she boomed. "Have they been warned?"

"It's all right, Mrs. Balchin," answered the landlord. "P.C. Dolittle's warned 'em."

"Where are they, then?" she demanded.

"Mrs. Steadman's upstairs," said the landlord, pointing to the inn. "I don't know where the others are."

"The 'Ickeys are safe," said a voice. "They're staying with us."

"That leaves on'y the Doves," the landlord said. "Who're they with?"

"The Doves!" exclaimed the Sergeant-major, in an odd voice.

Nobody else said anything.

Apprehension stole over me.

A thought struck me. Jim Dove and Nellie Balchin! Longshanks and I had seen them before we went back to bed. Had they been cut off by the flood and taken refuge in the church.

I wanted to voice my suspicions, but I was doubtful whether this would be good service to the lovers. I had not forgotten the feud between the Doves and the Balchins and here was the formidable Mrs. Balchin before me.

Someone was coming along the road.

"'Tis parson," the landlord said.

"Is everybody safe?" he asked, agitatedly, when he reached us.

Ignoring him, Mrs. Balchin declared, "My daughter's missing, too."

She glared through her pince-nez as though demanding to know where she was. I wondered why she had kept the matter to herself so long.

"Instead of talking like this," Longshanks put in, "we ought to be going for the Doves. Isn't there a boat?"

"Not up 'ere," said the landlord. "'Ickey's got one down at 'is place—that's the on'y one in the village. But it a'n't no good thinkin' o' that. We can't get at it."

I went to the Rector and introduced myself. Then I asked him whether his house were on the telephone. He said No, there was not a telephone in the village. The nearest was at the post office at Deadney across the river.

"If there's no boat available, couldn't a farm cart get through the water?" I asked.

"Too deep," he answered. "Besides, a horse could never pull it." Then he asked me: "Do you know who rang the church bell? The place must be surrounded by water."

I told him of my suspicions.

"What's the time now?" I asked.

He consulted his watch. "Twelve forty-five," he said.

"I thought it was much later. I wonder why Jim didn't sound the bell before?"

"Probably he didn't think of it," said the Rector. "I expect that when they found they were cut off by the flood—for the water would come up to the church from two directions—they retreated into the church and decided to make the best of it. Then one of them must have thought of signalling by means of the bell. But what is the good when we haven't a boat to go for them?"

The night was cold, but no one had left the group in front of the inn except Mrs. Balchin. She had disappeared.

"Can't somebody think of a way of reaching the Doves?" the Rector called out. "Surely there must be a way."

"Couldn't we make a raft?" Longshanks suggested.

"Where's Tim Tilley?" the landlord suddenly demanded. "Ah, there you are. 'Ave 'ee got any timber, Tim? Could 'ee make a raft?".

"I doubt if I've got enough," Tim Tilley answered. "You'd want a tidy big craft—there's three o' the Doves."

"It could make several journeys," I said. And then: "Come along. Let's get a move on. The water may be rising yet."

Longshanks and I and the landlord went with Tim Tilley to his cottage. He had very little timber there. None of us had the least idea how big the raft would have to be to bear the weight of even one man; and it had to be buoyant enough to take at least two; otherwise it would be useless.

At last the raft and rough paddle were finished. Full of doubt we bore them to the edge of the flood water and there floated the former.

"Who's going?" I asked.

"I will," said Longshanks at once.

"You're no good, old chap," I said. "You don't know where to go."

"The lighter the man the better," said Hickey, the cowman. "I'll go. I a'n't never navigated a raft afore, but I 'spects I can manage it."

He waded out knee-deep, pushing the raft, and then gingerly climbed on to it, and kneeling down, started to paddle. He had not gone far before the raft came to a stop.

"'E've 'it the fence!" someone exclaimed. "That's wot 'tis." He put his hands to his mouth and shouted. "Guide 'er along the fence, man. You kin get round it."

But poor Tom Hickey couldn't move the raft. He bent forward and tried to shove it free with his hand, but the frail craft capsized, and he tumbled overboard.

In the bright moonlight we saw him come to the surface and struggle wildly. Then apparently he caught hold of the fence.

"My Gawd!" someone exclaimed. "'E can't swim!"

Someone was going to his rescue. It was Longshanks! I wanted to stop him, but how could I? I knew that he was a powerful swimmer.

He waded half-way and then began to swim. He was with Hickey in a very short time. He clung to the fence and spoke earnestly to the little man. So bright was the moonlight that we could even see Hickey's nod in reply.

The pair took to the water, Longshanks swimming on his back. Hickey did not struggle and in a few minutes Longshanks had him on dry ground.

"Off you go to the inn, you bad fellow," I commanded Longshanks. "And take Mr. Hickey with you. Landlord, hot rum is indicated, I think."

Longshanks put his feet into his boots which, together with his coat, he had left on the road before he took to the water and, shivering with cold, went towards the inn.

At that moment the stentorian voice of the Sergeant-major came to us.

"I want four men," she commanded.

We gaped at her.

"Come on; get a move on," she bellowed.

Such was her power that we all responded at once.

"You men are worse than a sick headache," she stormed at us. "While you've been standing about wondering what to do we've made a raft."

In the yard behind the inn was a queer-looking contraption—a stout table fastened on to four barrels.

"Mrs. Balchin," I said, in much admiration, "you've made the very thing. You're a marvel."

She ignored me. "Now don't waste any more time," she commanded. "Down to the water with it."

"A paddle'll never get that thing along," said Mr. Winterbottom.

"We're not going to have a paddle," snapped the Sergeant-major. "We're going to use it as a punt. I got your boy to saw down one of those nice young oak saplings you're growing at the back."

"You did *what?*" roared the landlord.

The boy was coming down the road bearing a straight slim pole. The Sergeant-major pointed to it.

"Any objections?" she demanded. "No? Well, shut up, then. Now, who's going to carry me out to the raft?"

"*You're* not going," I protested.

"Oh, yes I am," she said. "And so are you. You're the only man I've ever met who's got the guts—excuse the language, Father—to answer me back. So you'll come."

I suppose that she referred to our brief conversation of the previous afternoon when I had asked her to let the caravan pass.

"And someone carry the Father out," she added.

It was extraordinary how the men obliged her. In a few minutes she and I were alone on the raft. It floated securely on the water.

"Which way?" I asked, holding the pole in readiness.

She pointed. I began to shove the craft along, keeping clear of where the fence was. The concourse of people on the shore gave us a cheer. The Sergeant-major grinned, sourly.

For ten minutes I worked in silence. I felt that the Sergeant-major was regarding me with approval. We came to a haystack. Only the top half was above the water.

"Now turn half-left," she commanded. She pointed across the still grey flood. "You can see the place now," she said.

The Doves' house was half-submerged. There was a light in the top window.

At last we were there. Excited voices greeted us. Then there was an exclamation and a woman's voice.

"Mrs. Balchin!"

"Yes," answered my companion, grimly. "The *Sergeant-major!* What then?"

Silence. The face at the window disappeared.

"Mrs. Balchin," I said gently, "is this the end of the feud?"

She glared at me through her pince-nez. "What's it got to do with you?" she demanded, gruffly.

"Only this," I said, "that you are a very brave and resourceful woman and that I am very proud to know you."

"Get along with you!" she growled at me. And then: "Emily Dove!"

A woman's face appeared at the open window.

"We're waiting to take you to safety," said Mrs. Balchin, in a voice which I did not recognise. "Come along, Emily. If you sit on the window-sill the good Father will lift you down."

In silence Mrs. Dove put her legs over the sill. I lifted her down. In silence her husband followed.

"Where's my daughter and your son?" Mrs. Balchin asked.

"She's not here," Mrs. Dove answered, tearfully.

Mrs. Balchin's composure left her. "Not here!" she exclaimed. "I made sure she'd be here. I thought she was with Jim and couldn't get home because of the flood."

"Don't worry," I interposed. "I know where she is." I began to wonder whether she would have been so eager to rescue the Doves had she known that her daughter was not with them; but I put the thought aside; I had learnt much of the woman in the past hour and I knew that she would not have acted differently.

In silence I poled the raft back. Once I looked at the Sergeant-major. She was supporting Mrs. Dove in the crook of her arm. Mr. Dove was staring across the grey water.

So soon as we neared "land" someone shouted, and people quickly appeared on the road. Half-a-dozen waded out to us. Mr. and Mrs. Dove were carried ashore.

"Where *is* my daughter?" the Sergeant-major demanded, looking at me.

I explained and added. "And Jim Dove is a most estimable young man. So sensible of him to think of ringing the church bell, wasn't it? If *I* had a daughter like yours she should certainly marry him."

"You coming ashore, Mrs. Balchin?" asked Mr. Winterbottom, who had waded out.

"Yes, go ashore," said I. "I can manage Jim and Nellie alone. I know the way."

She said nothing, but suffered Mr. Winterbottom to carry her to land.

It was half-an-hour later when I returned with Jim and Nellie. When we had been borne ashore we went soberly to the inn. Lights shone from the bar-parlour window.

As we entered the bar parlour Longshanks, holding aloft a mug of steaming punch, was toasting the Sergeant-major. The Sergeant-major, her bonnet perched high on her head, gazed benignly at Jim and Nellie as they stood hesitantly on the threshold.

"Come in, children," she said, "and sit down. I think," she added, "you may be allowed to have a glass of punch."

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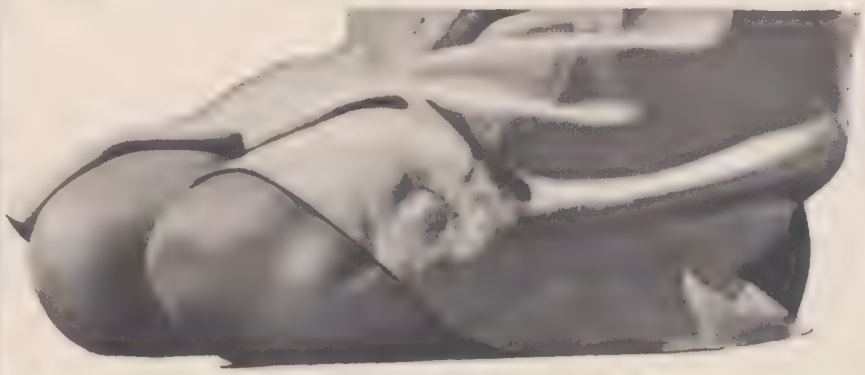

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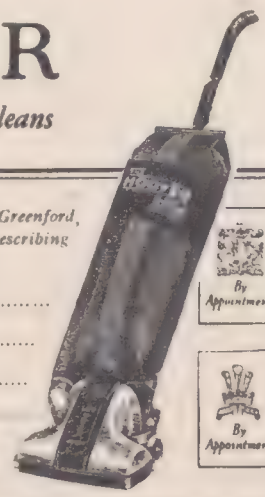

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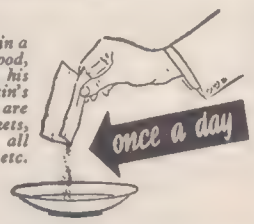

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He was taking aim, his finger squeezed the trigger. It was point-blank range

STRANGE ONES

They might merely have been footprints in the sands of time for all the hunter knew about those strange tracks, but they led to stranger things

BY LOUIS KAYE
ILLUSTRATED BY SINCLAIR CALOW

THE hunter, Nugarra, had made a discovery. It was an interesting discovery and also startling. Nugarra was afraid and because his fear was of the supernatural, he sought Waugani, the witch doctor.

"Waugani, I have seen tracks of a Thing that has passed across the land. What it is I know not. No living creature that I know makes such tracks. It is from the Spirit World."

Old Waugani sat outside his gunyah with his two lubras, flies swarming like bees on his naked flesh. No expression showed on his flat-nosed, thick-lipped face, but his deep-set, heavy-lidded eyes regarded Nugarra ruminatively.

"You are a fool, Nugarra," he said, at last. "When aught comes from the Spirit World, we elders of the tribe know of it. Must you drag an old man from his rest to prove the folly of your words?"

Yet when, grumbling, Waugani followed Nugarra to the strange tracks, he was puzzled. "Make smoke," he ordered. "Let Yunda, Wokra, Tullayuk and the other elders see the smoke. It is time for talk."

"Then I was right," Nugarra said, as he built a fire to smoke-signal, "and it comes from the Spirit World?"

Waugani said coldly, "Only your eyes were right. Anybody has eyes that can see tracks that he has never seen before. But to know the meaning thereof is wisdom. I will talk with wise men."

Appeared in due course the other elders of the tribe, who formed the council of wise men and the nearest thing to government, or authority, known among the nomads of the desert. They looked at the tracks and then walked away and squatted in a group in the red sand—old naked men; Stone Age men, such as might have been found in the dawn of humanity.

"What is the Thing?" Yunda asked.

"Whence does it come?" Tullayuk spoke next.

"Not from the Spirit World," said Wokra. "It moves and lives and breathes."

"It is not one Thing but several Things," Yunda declared. "The tracks are not all the same size and are at different distances between."

"Then let us follow the strange tracks, Waugani," Yunda said. "If it is not a thing to strike terror into hearts and is good to eat, it would be a pity to let it go. Our tribe will be hungry before the sun rises twice again, for the hunting is bad and the yam patches are barren."

"Aye, we shall follow it," Waugani said. "Yet am I more curious than hungry. Have I not lived for many moons and yet not seen the beast, if beast it is, that makes such tracks? I would see it so that my wisdom might be increased."

The whole tribe followed the tracks, and Nugarra marched with the warriors in the lead. Behind the warriors came the old men, the lubras and piccaninnies and, last of all, to guard the rear, came more warriors. A few lean dogs followed in the tribesmen's shadows.

They camped that night by the tracks and made no fires lest they be seen; they gnawed kangaroo bones and ate goanna flesh; they drank water from coolamons carried by the lubras, and then they slept, uneasily, waking to peer fearfully at the tracks in the light of the moon. Before dawn they went on and, at sunrise, Nugarra, scouting in the lead, stopped and signed to the tribe to halt.

Something was ahead on the plain and the sight of it, grotesque and motionless under the sun, awed Nugarra. He turned back to meet Waugani.

"I know not what it is," he told Waugani uneasily, "but it looks like the Thing."

"Is it watching us?" Waugani asked.

"It lies down and rests."

Waugani talked with the elders and beckoned other warriors to join Nugarra.

"Go with Nugarra," he said. "I follow. Go carefully and in silence, not showing yourselves more than need be."

Nugarra looked back at Pabeeda, his wife; she was with the lubras of the tribe, but she was watching him and he knew she was afraid. He raised a hand in a careless gesture of reassurance, though his limbs felt weak and his heart was hammering with his fear of the supernatural. But he must go on. The cicatrices of a warrior were on his torso.

From patch to patch of saltbush Nugarra and the other braves moved slowly, low to the ground, crawling on their bellies at the last toward the thing upon the sand. Then, when they were less than two hundred yards away, they stopped and waited for Waugani.

He joined them and lay staring through the sunlight.

"It sleeps still," whispered Nugarra, nervously.

"No," said Waugani, "it does not sleep. It is dead. And it is but one of the Things that walked upon the sand; see the tracks that lead on beyond."

Nugarra looked at the tracks and again at the grotesque shape motionless in the sun. "If it is dead," he said, "it is of flesh and blood and bone even as the cow or the horse."

"Aye, be not afraid," Waugani said. "Let us go on." He rose and signed to the tribe to follow.

Amazed and awed, they stopped and stared, and the elders grouped together solemn and wise.

"It has a neck long and curved like an emu's," said Wokra.

"It has no feathers. It has hair like a horse."

"Its legs are longer than those of the white man's horse. Its feet are not the same. Its head is different."

"And it has two bellies," said Tullayuk. "That is the strangest thing of all. See you, Waugani; one belly in the right place and one on its back."

Waugani, staring at the hump of the first camel he had ever seen, admitted: "Truly, it is strange. Yet it is flesh and bone. It is much meat."

"It is meat! Aye, it is meat!" the tribe cried.

And half an hour later Nugarra looked again at the tracks of the other strange beasts that had gone on, and at the footprint of a white man in the sand. He had no fear now. He knew that the tribe would still follow the strange tracks. For the meat was good. It was very good.

"And the hunting is poor, and the yam patches are barren," he said to his wife Pabeeda.

Delacey was worried. It seemed a long time since he had buried the Afghan camelman and the Fitzroy River black who had started out with him from Nayooka. How long ago was it? Delacey couldn't remember. His head ached, his eyes ached and his body was alternately hot and cold with fever. He had lost count of days and camps in this long march through sand and heat and blazing light; it had all become like part of a delirium, from which he seemed to emerge dazed and weary. But certainly it was a long time ago—three weeks or even four—since he had buried his black camp boy and Mahomed Ali, the camelman.

The two had quarrelled. Mahomed Ali was new in the country and could speak

little English; Yaccupera, the black boy, could speak not much more and neither knew the other's native tongue. So there was a misunderstanding about some order Mahomed Ali had given and blood had run hot. Yaccupera had flung a spear; Mahomed Ali, impaled on the spear, had managed to grab his rifle and shoot Yaccupera.

All this while Delacey was knocking specimens off a quartzblow. He had come back to camp to find the black dead and the camelman dying. There was nothing he could do for Mahomed Ali, except wait to do the final thing; then he had broken camp, even though the samples of gold-specked quartz tempted him to linger. But he knew that country wasn't good for a man to be alone in. Also, he didn't know much about camels.

He was one of the pioneers of that method of travel for prospecting in West Australia, and he had been learning about camels from Mahomed Ali. When the camels had been brought into the land, Mahomed Ali and many of his countrymen had come with them. They were to trek all over those hot desert lands of the Australian interior with their pack trains, but Mahomed Ali hadn't had enough camels to make up a train. So Delacey had hired him and his string of six, and all had gone well till that fight in the camp.

Now nothing was going well. Delacey, heading for Hall's Creek, had tried to short cut and had turned from the trail taken out. He was having trouble with the camels, which seemed to know he had made a mistake in failing to back-track over those earlier pad-prints they had left in the sand, and he was inclined to agree with them.

But they themselves were not imperishable. One had died already, and another looked sick. "Yes," Delacey told himself, "old Soljee looks mighty sick. Have to camp early to-night."

He thought that he himself would feel better in the night's coolness and he did, a little. But the sullen camels bubbled and growled, and each time he woke and heard them he knew there would be trouble when he started to saddle and load in the morning.

The sun was two hours high before he got the last bellowing, raging beast saddled and packed. And by then, what with his weakness to begin with, he was almost exhausted. But he could ride now and rest as he rode. He went to his riding camel, but in the act of mounting, checked himself and stood staring through the heat quiver.

Afar off, small, like toy figures, blacks were moving on the sand. They stopped and watched him. They were still watching when he mounted and rode away at the head of the file. When he looked round again, they were coming on.

Delacey felt an impulse to hurry the camels, but he knew he mustn't hurry. Unless he cut sick Soljee and his pack camels from the string, he couldn't outpace the blacks, in any case. Also, there might be other tribesmen ahead that they could smoke signal, and a running man was as good as finished if they headed him off. He had to look as if he had faith in his rifle and his nerve.

So Delacey went on steadily as if unconcerned, and let the blacks catch up, for he knew they were going to do it some time, and it was better than in the night. He wanted to know his chances. He wanted to know how hungry they were.

He halted the file, and *hooshed* his mount. He took a few steps from the saddle; there was a fever-lag and an unsteadiness in his gait which he didn't wish noticed. He stood with his rifle grounded and signed to an old buck to come forward and talk.

The old buck was Waugani, but Delacey didn't know his name. Nor did he know his tongue any better than Waugani knew his. Yet by signs they gave meaning to their words.

"We want food," said Waugani, indicating the tribe, the camels and his mouth. "We hunger."

"Yet you've eaten," Delacey said, pointing back along his trail. "You cut up a camel and ate." He performed the action of a man cutting up meat and eating, and knew that Waugani understood and the camel had been eaten.

But Waugani gestured toward the tribe. "They be many," he said. And he indicated the sun and followed the course of the sun twice with his hand. "It was two days ago we eat the camel."

Delacey looked at the tribesmen, the lubras and the children. All told, there were few short of four hundred; and if they had hungered before they ate the camel, even that quantity of meat was no great quantity. Still, it was the hunger they feared rather than the hunger they knew, that troubled them now. And Delacey cursed the fact that they had picked up his trail and followed him into this barren waste; otherwise, they would have headed for better game country. They would have been all right by now, maybe, instead of licking their lips in the tracks of his camels.

He thought quickly. His supplies were not very low and he could give them what Yaccupera and Mahomed Ali had not lived to eat. But what was that among four hundred blacks? A taste to whet their appetites. He could give them Soljee to slaughter and the meat would satisfy them for a time. But such a gift established bad precedent. Delacey had

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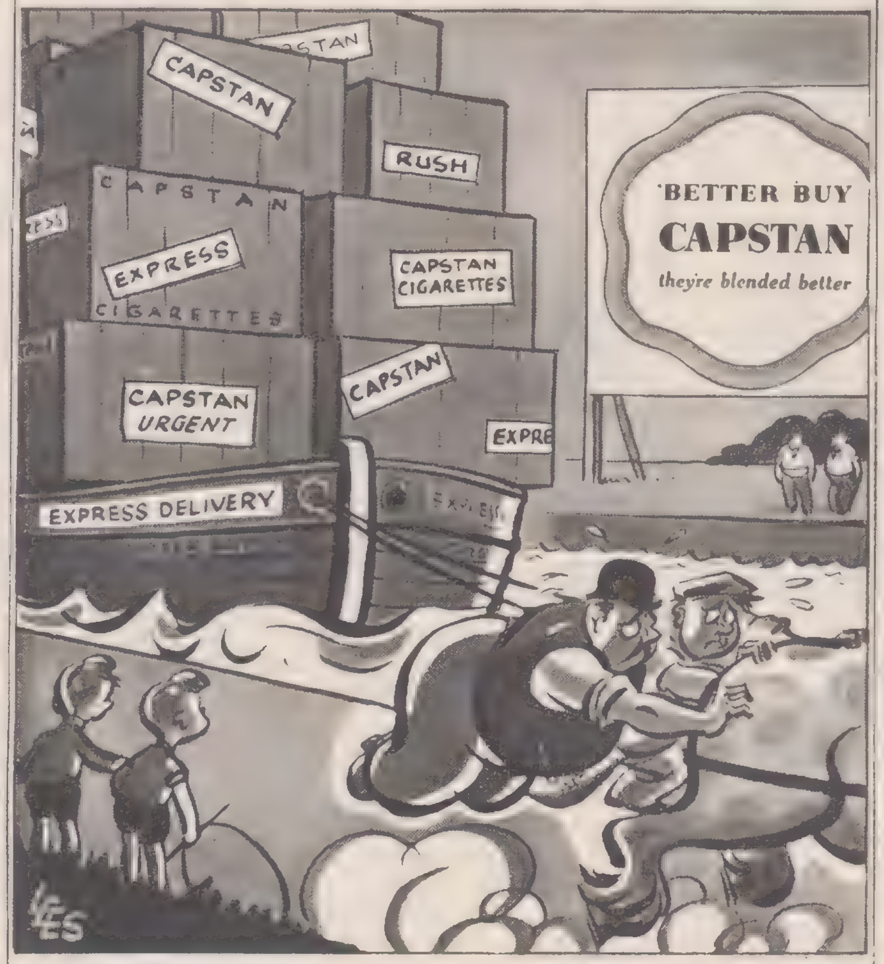

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talked the possibility over with an old-timer at Hall's Creek. "Sure, it's all right for cattlemen," the old-timer had said, "to pass over a beast to the niggers when they need it. But your own riding and pack stock—now that's bad. The niggers'd get to expect it, and every prospector going out in that territory would be dogged by 'em. No, mister, it can't be done. Anybody that does it is only signin' the death warrant of other prospectors."

Delacey knew the argument was sound. He also knew that if he gave a camel to the tribesmen, he would have more tribesmen to deal with before he went far. They always shared food within the tribe. There would be smoke signals, calling others up to the feast. And Delacey would never see the old-timer at Hall's Creek again; they would get him in the night sometime when he was trying to save the other camels.

"No," Delacey said, "I give no camels." He pointed to the few lean dogs. "You have still got dogs."

Waugani watched him return to his riding camel and go on at the head of the file. And Waugani didn't know why Delacey wouldn't kill a camel as white men sometimes killed a steer for blacks to eat. All he knew was that the white man had more camels than he could ride or needed to carry his packs. And Waugani was angry.

"The white man has meat and will not give us meat," he said to Tullayuk. "When among our people one man has more meat than he needs and others have no meat, does he keep that meat to himself?"

"No," Tullayuk said. "It is because he is a white man and not one of our tribe that he does such a thing."

"It was a mistake, perhaps," said Yunda, "to follow the white man for meat, for thus we are all led into bad country for hunting."

"True," Waugani admitted, "but now we have followed the white man, there is nothing to hunt but the white man's strange beasts. Let us go on."

"To-night," said Tullayuk, "we will kill the white man."

"Be patient," said Waugani. "Still is there not in our bodies strength to walk? The white man does not travel fast and has a long way to go. Nor does he know where there is water, for he follows no beaten way and has no black to guide him."

"But we know where there is water," Tullayuk nodded. "Not water that beast or bird can drink, but water that we can find by making a hole in the sand where a rock is. We know where the rock is."

"And we know where the meat is," said Waugani, "and it is ours, if we do but wait."

And the elders were silent then, having decided upon the matter out of their wisdom and the patience of men whose blood had cooled.

"All the same," Nugarra, who had heard the talk, said to his wife Pabeeda, "the white man will lose the strange beasts to-night if he sleeps."

The tribe followed the file of camels till sundown, for to-day Delacey did not halt early to let the camels forage. He knew he dare not permit them to stray even in short hobbles. When he camped, he neither unsaddled nor unloaded, but left the camels on their knees as he had *hooshed* them. But later, so that they would remain on their knees, he ground hobbled each one with a rope round its foreleg. Kneeling camels were less likely to be speared and he could defend them better if they were motionless.

He opened grub sacks, but because of his fever, he ate without hunger. It was easier to drink, because he was always thirsty. Then he sat down and waited for the moon.

He sat with his rifle across his knees, listening for the blacks he couldn't see, but whose camp he knew was less than a mile away across a ridge.

He heard nothing, saw nothing for a long time. Then he felt the skin on his backbone tighten. His eyes searched the darkness quickly. He thought there were shadowy forms moving, but he couldn't be sure. He waited. If he fired, and the blacks were only reconnoitring, it might start trouble; if he didn't fire, the blacks might think he was unprepared and attack. He must hold them off till the moon arose.

His nerves were taut as violin strings. He still couldn't make up his mind what to do. But it was hard to sit there and not shoot—to wait motionless while blacks fitted spears to wommeras, clenched their hands on boomerangs. A shower of weapons, and very likely he'd never have a chance to shoot.

Several times his finger began to squeeze the trigger; each time, by a supreme effort of will, he relaxed his finger again. But his nerves didn't relax; all the time he had that feeling of something in him about to snap.

And then it did snap, and something in him let loose—but not by way of his rifle. That was the funny thing. What broke loose from him was a torrent of curses, directed at his snarling, growling camels that wouldn't stay quiet while he tried to listen. . . . The curses had ripped out before he could restrain them, but when he was silent, he didn't feel that tight, breaking thing in him any more. He felt like a man whose rage was spent, though he knew it was not rage, but fear that had broken out of him. He felt quite cool and unafraid. And then he knew, anyway, that there was nothing any more to fear.

He knew the blacks were withdrawing—not far perhaps, but that circle was widening, loosening, letting him breathe. He could see patches of darkness darker than the ground moving away. And then he couldn't see them because they had gone out of sight or had stopped.

"But, anyway, they've drawn back," he thought. "They know I'm awake, damn 'em!"

The moon rose, sweeping pale light across the desert, leaving only the hollows dark. And Delacey could see the blacks then. He could see them squatting on the sand, sombre and motionless, not three hundred yards away. They were easy targets. They knew they were easy targets, but just as surely they knew that while they made no overt movement of hostility, the white man would not shoot.

But it was an ordeal, sitting there in the moonlight with the black tribesmen squatting in the sand and watching him; it was an ordeal in the morning when he trekked on with the sullen camels and the dark figures followed with the inexorable ruthlessness of a pack of wolves hungry for meat, but patient, waiting their time.

And the heat didn't help Delacey. He was a sick man to-day. He was sicker than Soljee, the camel that held back the pace of the string. And in his lucid moments, between the delirium haze and babblings of his fever, he thought more than once of Soljee, the sick camel that would not die. Supposing, he asked himself, Soljee died—wouldn't that hold back the tribesmen and give him respite for a time?

And wouldn't it allow him to save race as well? For if Soljee died, he would not be abandoning the camel to the blacks; he would not have yielded. He could do nothing about a dead or dying camel except uncouple it from the file and leave it in the sand. No, he wouldn't have yielded. He could tell that to the old-timer at Hall's Creek, if he ever got there.

But Soljee didn't die; all Soljee did was hold back the pace of the string. And he couldn't abandon the camel while it was on its feet.

Worn and weak, with a sleepless night behind him, Delacey must have slept for periods as he rode, for there were blank spaces. He didn't know whether these were caused by fever fog, or sleep, but in any case they were dangerous.

He kept his balance on his swaying camel as a somnambulist keeps his feet, but he was worried that he might sleep too soundly. And he thought he might drop his rifle. He slung it on his shoulder with his arm through the leather sling; but he knew afterwards that he hadn't taken proper care, and should have put his head through the sling. For he came wide awake all of a sudden and the rifle was gone.

The sudden freedom from its weight might have wakened him, or his mount might have faltered in its stride as the weapon fell. Anyway, there was the rifle in the dust, trampled by the feet of the camels. And there were the blacks, almost within spear range.

Delacey stopped the camels. He was almost in a panic, but he knew that if he started to run back to his rifle, the blacks would be aware of two things; that he was too weak to run, and that he didn't have another weapon. He mustn't let them see it meant so much.

So he sauntered back as nonchalantly as he could. He didn't have a long way to go, for the camels had not travelled far before he had wakened and realised he had lost the weapon. But it was far enough—about the length of the file of camels. The tribesmen had not been directly on his tracks, but had followed parallel to them. They were abreast of him now, standing motionless and watching. It was possible for them to close in between him and the camels, cutting him off.

But he wasn't afraid of that when he picked up the rifle. Stooping made him giddy and he stood for a moment while the swirling haze cleared from his eyes. But through the haze he could see the blacks in a blurred way, and they didn't move. Not till he turned and went back to the camels. Then they advanced slowly for a distance and stopped, leaving only one to advance.

It was old Waugani, though Delacey still didn't know his name. He waited, standing beside his kneeling camel. And again, though neither knew the tongue of the other, each knew what the other said.

"We have eaten the dogs, white man," Waugani said, holding his hand down to the height of a dog and pointing at his mouth and at the tribe, among whom now there were no dogs. "So will you give us the meat of the strange beast?"

Delacey shook his head. "I need the camels. Without the camels I die."

He tried to make that clear with signs, but still he knew he hadn't made clear to the old tribesman his need of all the camels. And the black was angry again, but he went away after a little while and Delacey mounted and rode on.

This was in the morning. At noon, Delacey made no halt, but pushed on into the afternoon. And still there was no sign of the trail he sought, nor of any waterhole. But somewhere the blacks had got water that he and his camels had missed, and he thought that not for the camel meat would the blacks have shown him where the water was. They guarded well their secret supplies.

And Waugani, returning to his people, said: "He is a man with the skin tight on the bones of his face and his eyes burning deep in his face, and when he walks it is with the legs of a man who cannot walk far," said Waugani. "Be patient. We hunger, yet are we stronger than he. To-night he will sleep long."

But young tribesmen were complaining and Waugani looked at them in doubt, as if wondering how long he could hold them.

"When the white man walked in the sand apart from his strange beasts, why did we not spear the beasts?" Nugarra asked. "Then was the time."

"A time will come again," Waugani said. "We go on and wait for the time, that is all. In the night is best."

So it was in the afternoon, while the sun was two hours from setting, that Delacey saw the blacks moving ahead on both sides of the route. And he knew what that meant. His mouth set as he unslung his rifle and held it across his thighs, ready for an ambush.

When he saw the blacks again, though, they were not rushing over sand ridges or rising from cover. They were there, openly ahead of him—barring his route, while the women and children kept off in the sand. And Delacey wondered a little why they showed so openly, not perceiving for a moment that it was Waugani's last attempt to settle things bloodlessly—a bluff and yet more than a bluff.

When he halted his camels, both Waugani and Tullayuk advanced near enough for speech and signs.

"You cannot go on, white man," Waugani said.

"Look at the spears of our warriors," said Tullayuk.

Delacey did look at the spears of the warriors. But they didn't add to his fear; they made him angry. He had felt no truculence toward the tribe before; he had known their need and, looking at the women and children, he had wondered if in the end he could hold out against them. He was sorry for them, but he realised again that if he gave in this thing would always be happening—the blacks would leave their hunting grounds to follow the meat that went with the white men across the land and the blood of black men and white would stain the trail of the camel.

"I go on," he told Waugani and Tullayuk, and though they didn't understand his words they heard the anger in them and saw the set purpose in his face. "Call your men away before I shoot."

Waugani and Tullayuk, chagrined and sullen-eyed, moved toward the warriors, signing to them. But the warriors were hungry and savage. Up till now they had been silent, but as Delacey rode straight at that barrior across his path, his rifle ready to clear the way, they started yelling and brandishing their boomerangs and spears.

Delacey's jaw set. The blacks were all within spear range, and he was watching the spears drop horizontal for the throw.

That was probably why he hadn't noticed the movement of a red-brown form from a patch of scrub when the blacks had given tongue to their war cries. He was too busy; he was taking aim; his finger squeezed the trigger. . . .

It was point blank range, and Delacey never knew why he missed. It might have been the fever in his body, or the boomerang, the warrior cast. Certainly the boomerang never hit him and might have been deflected by the bullet as the bullet, in turn, was deflected by the boomerang. But there it was—the black was still alive among the other blacks and something else instead was dead.

And he saw others like it, running from cover—creatures as weird and grotesque as the camel—a herd of kangaroos that had been disturbed in their daytime slumbers.

Delacey wanted to rub his eyes at the sight of the herd in that barren waste, but he couldn't rub his eyes and shoot. And he must shoot, straight and fast! Here was a chance too good to bungle. . . .

He emptied his magazine, and slammed in another clip. Three kangaroos were down. His next batch of shots dropped three more. Feverishly he reloaded. Two more kangaroos ceased to bound. He dropped another before they vanished over a ridge. Nine kangaroos. Delacey watched the blacks running to collect the bag. . . .

Then he started on across the desert, with none barring his way. When the tribe had eaten, maybe the tribe would follow the camels again. Nine kangaroos would not end the famine, but the respite was good. With luck he would see again the old-timer at Hall's Creek.

Nugarra's wife, Pabeeda, was part of Delacey's luck. "The white man killed for us the meat the warriors' spears would have failed to reach," she said to Nugarra. "Therefore am I glad you did not kill him."

"It was in my heart to kill," Nugarra admitted. "But then I did not know whither sped the death from his hand. There was the death pointing at me as it seemed while I had my boomerang raised to throw. But then I did not fall and, instead, fell the first kangaroo. Yet how do I know that was the white man's target?"

"Did he not kill other meat for the tribe?" Pabeeda argued.

"True," Nugarra conceded, "he could have aimed death at the tribe, but he aimed it at the kangaroos. He gave us food."

And this talk passed from lip to lip and none for a time thought again of following the white man's strange beasts. And when, tentatively, the talk turned that way, old Waugani was also perhaps part of Delacey's luck, for he silenced the talk.

"Am I not old and very wise?" Waugani said. "Listen, then: The kangaroos the white man killed for us, were not here by choice; something drove them here and it must have been a waterhole gone dry. They were trying to reach country again where there was water and tired they slept, waiting for the cool of the night. But as they travelled, others must be travelling, across the sands to the other water. Therefore, we but need to follow.

"It is useless to follow the new strange beasts of the white man, for the white man will never give of their meat. Not this white man nor any other. He will fight to the death for those strange beasts. Here where the sand spreads wide, they are even as the white man's life, and though he use angry words in speech to them, he loves them even as his life."

"Yet are they ugly and unlovable beasts to be so precious," a young warrior said rashly. "How know you that, Waugani?"

"Fool and brother of fools," Waugani answered, "did not the white man prove it?"

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Write for Free Illustrated Brochure No. 38, showing over 40 models, to Petit & Co., Ltd. (Wholesale only), 81, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

IF all the rolls of textiles I have seen during the last few days were unwound and put end to end, I still wouldn't know how far they would go towards encircling Mae West and if you told me, I'd still be too dazed to understand.

Vast stands crowded with them and nearly every roll of material worth looking at; new designs, new colours, new processes, and new materials, they are all to be seen at the Textiles' Section of the British Industries Fair at Earl's Court, London, S.W.5, or at least I believe they are, for having just left the Fair, my brain is in such a whirl of materials that I am not quite sure about anything. That's the worst of seeing so many new things *en masse*.

But I do remember how popular linen and cotton seemed to be. In the better class cottons, a new peasant fabric with a strong coarse weave printed with bright objects on a white background was most attractive. It would make a marvellous coat to slip on over your bathing things this summer.

I can visualise a simple bodice, short sleeves, rather broad at the shoulders and a very wide skirt, either long or short, gathered to the bodice, covering sun-tanned skin!

A coat like this would be doubly useful, for imagine how attractive it would look worn over a simple white summer dress with a big, rather rough straw hat.

★ Many new linens had arrived from the North of Ireland and Scotland. For there has been a great increase in the demand for linen dress materials both here and abroad, causing the extensive research that has led to the development of fast colours and a variety of finishes.

There are, too, many new materials in rayon and artificial silk yarns. Surface effects predominate for dyed fabrics, while for prints, lace patterns, subdued floral chevrons, floral stripes and metallic finishings will be the most prominent styles.

Then there is the more technical side such as permanent waterproofing, permanent organdie and linen finishes, anti-crease and pre-shrinkage, all of which are well worth looking into.

★ One of the Scottish exhibitors told me that they anticipate an increased use of tartans for outdoor and evening dress wear. Showing that national sentiment is already rising in readiness for the Empire Exhibition to be held in Glasgow in May. He wished kilts would take the place of shorts for hiking, for each kilt would require seven yards of material! Certainly a good idea as far as he was concerned! But I hae ma doots.

★ "You can see everything she is wearing under that satin dress, can't you—and it's a beautiful frock, too." This remark, word for word, was made to me at a dance the other evening. At first glance I agreed, but when I looked more carefully I had to admit that we weren't being quite fair. The girl was perfectly turned out until you noticed the awful bumps where her suspenders met her stockings.

I have seen so many stunning outfits spoiled by those little lumps. Yet it is so easy to wear your roll-on outside-in so that the bumpy parts of your suspenders come against your legs and don't show.

★ Now don't write to me and tell me that I've already told you. I know. And I also know that it's worth repeating. And what I now have to offer is an absolute gift.

It's bath-powder.

"Colours the water a lovely shade, smells delightful, and makes you feel ten years younger," says the woman who knows. "You can have it in seven pastel shades, lagoon blue, Neptune green, Ceres yellow, rose dawn, orchid, mauve, and tangerine (I often wonder how they think of such expressive names,) and the perfume is night-scented stock."

When I wrote of this bath-powder before I had so many inquiries that stocks ran out and I'm afraid many of you were disappointed. So now I am repeating the offer, which no one should miss. Send me twopence in stamps and your name and address in an envelope marked "Bath," and I will have a sample, sufficient for three or four baths, sent to you.

★ Thinking of giving a party? Here are some ideas that will not only make your table look attractive, but also provide something good to eat, too.

Sunbonnet Baby Salad.—10 half pears, 20 cloves (whole), 10 almonds, 3 or 4

VIRGINIA HALL'S PAGE

cherries, 10 teaspoonfuls whipped cream, lettuce.

Arrange the half pears, round side up, on lettuce leaves which should curl closely about the pears, giving the effect of bonnets. Place cloves in the pears to represent eyes, almonds for nose, and a piece of cherry for the mouth. Arrange the whipped cream to look like hair, and serve each salad on a separate little plate.

Here is a new way to present salmon and cucumber to your guests. Cut a cucumber into pieces of about four or five inches long, pare it and remove all the seeds from the centre with an apple corer. Fill this hole with flaked salmon. Tinned salmon does very well and, if you like, you can mix it with a little mayonnaise. Now cut the cucumber into fairly thin slices and serve with lettuce.

Have you tried making little men with jujubes stuck on cocktail sticks? And you can make lovely-looking donkeys from sausages and cocktail sticks. Not only are these amusing to look at, but they're fun to make. All these little tricks with food help at a party. Try 'em.

★ Last week I took Judy, my little Scottie dog, to her beauty parlour to have a bath. As my father said, things have come to a pretty pass when even our dogs go off to their beauty salon for a shampoo which costs 3s. 6d.—I can have my hair washed for 9d.!

When I went to fetch Judy, I found she had made friends with an enchanting little black and white cocker. When I asked why he was there, I was told that he was on a diet. When at home he refused to eat anything but meat, and if he wasn't given meat he just got thinner and thinner. I wondered whether Judy had had time, before I called for her, to tell her cocker friend what *she* eats, what she likes, and what is good for her too.

We give her dog food that we buy in a lb. tin for 6d. This food is really nutritious and wholesome, as it is carefully proportioned in protein, fat and crude fibre. It contains meat, meat by-products, bone meal, cereal, soya bean meal, flour, salt, wheat flour, and cod liver oil.

Actually meat is the principal ingredient for it builds muscle and is strength-sustaining. Bone is also vitally necessary for its lime content and to balance the laxative effect of straight meat.

Vitamin "A" is added to fortify the body against colds and infection, promotes growth, and prevents ophthalmia, which leads to blindness. Vitamin "D" is the sunshine vitamin which helps in formation and preservation of teeth, prevents rickets, and is especially needed now when so many pets are kept indoors. The cereal which is added to the food lends substance and protein to the diet.

And it's ready cooked and only waits to be served. Once served, of course, it doesn't have to wait very long to be eaten!

If you are interested in any of the things mentioned in this page please write to Virginia Hall, c/o "The Passing Show," 92 Long Acre, W.C.2, for she is very willing to help in such matters

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I RETURN TO AWAIT THE ITALIAN INVADERS

Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell, 73-year-old biologist and former chief of London's Zoo, retired to peaceful, sunny Málaga only to find himself thrust into Civil War; his lovely white villa and its fragrant garden an oasis in a bomb-swept land. When Government troops take possession of the city he shelters the family of a neighbour, aristocratic Tomas Bolin, who has Franco sympathies and is imprisoned by the local authorities. Meanwhile Sir Peter looks after Dona Mercedes Bolin, ner five daughters and their grandmother and watches over their unoccupied mansion, which is constantly being searched by Government patrols. Later the mansion becomes a hospital for wounded troops, and Tomas Bolin, whose health has failed during his imprisonment, becomes one of the patients. When foreign residents in the city are told to evacuate, Sir Peter manages to have the grandmother and the five daughters taken aboard a British ship bound for Gibraltar and Portugal. His attempts to get Tomas Bolin and his wife out of the country seemed doomed to failure until at last he smuggles them down to the quay and gets them on to a British destroyer, which carries all three to Gibraltar. The Bolins join their children in Portugal. Sir Peter returns to England.

This is the third of four articles taken from Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell's book, "My House in Málaga," recently published by Faber and Faber (8s. 6d.)

Round Málaga, all over the irregular ground, armies were advancing from all points of the compass, finding little opposition. Coming down the valleys, field-guns barked, machine-guns clattered and rifles spluttered

MY MÁLAGA ADVENTURES BY SIR PETER CHALMERS MITCHELL

EVENTUALLY I decided to go back to Málaga. It was my home. I had come to love and respect the people who, possibly, were going to face more terrible things; and I was unhappy about my garden and flowers. So, just before Christmas, I left for Gibraltar on a Japanese boat, taking with me, as a gift to the hospital, a supply of hypodermic syringes and a large quantity of morphia, obtained through the kindness of a Wimpole Street friend.

I had to wait some days in Gibraltar, as the only means of getting to Málaga was on the next destroyer. Some of the officials were difficult, one suggesting that they would first have to consult the acting consul. But I vetoed that, knowing with all my personal liking for Clissold, he would not be too pleased to see a British subject and, possibly, one of my leanings, coming back. The British admiral, however, to whom I was passed, was most kind and arranged it for me.

During my compulsory stay, I thought that I noticed a slight change in official opinion. It was less wholly favourable to Franco and Franco's chances. But unofficial opinion was as virulently pro-Franco as ever.

Gibraltar was almost an outpost of the Rebels; full of Franco's agents. Comparatively few Spanish refugees were now living in the hotels, but to my surprise a large colony of them were living in Algeciras and apparently could come and go as they pleased in the little steamer that plies between Algeciras and Gibraltar.

One or two of Franco's officers had their wives in Gibraltar and often came across to visit them. To my surprise, the Bolins were living in Algeciras, having returned from Lisbon to Spain. They crossed for shopping very often and, on the second afternoon after my arrival, Doña María and one of the girls came to the hotel to see me.

They were full of kindness and gratitude and I was delighted to know that all the five girls were well, although as it happened the four whom I did not see had bad colds.

At the last moment Tomas and Mercedes came, Tomas well-dressed in his usual civilian clothes and Mercedes looking well and happy. They, too, were affectionate, but just a little confused when I asked them why they had come back to Spain.

Tomas explained that they feared Franco would have confiscated their property if they had stayed out. There was no word of the chest trouble for which we had said that surgical treatment was necessary and, despite my account of his mental condition in Málaga, he was now in health and excellent spirits.

He wished me to give a message to one of his servants to join the Requetes, and not the Fascists as soon as the Rebels entered! Mercedes, just a little ashamed after the very long talks we had had, told me that they were all making bandages for the wounded, and that I did not know "the terrible things the Reds were doing" to their people all over Spain. She told me that they had thought of going to Seville, Queipo de Llano's headquarters, where living was cheaper, but they preferred to be nearer Málaga.

Also nearer safety in Gibraltar, I thought, a little disillusioned. But they were charming, almost affectionate, and we parted on friendly terms.

An English woman in the hotel told me that food conditions were getting very difficult in Málaga and that I should arrange for a provision dealer to pack a hamper for me, and to send one to me each time a British warship went to relieve the ship on guard. That was done and I was given tea, coffee, flour, sugar, biscuits, lentils, jam, cigarettes and a few tins of preserved meats.

The parcels, with an identifying mark, were sent to the Admiralty docks on the mornings when a ship was leaving, consigned to the British consulate, and had not therefore to pass the Customs.

The run from Gibraltar was swift and smooth, with only the usual roll of a fast destroyer, and the commander and officers

were most kind to me. I was the only British passenger for Málaga, but the deck was loaded with Spanish refugees of the poorer classes being returned by orders of the British Government.

Some were from Málaga itself; others had contrived to escape from La Linea and neighbouring villages when the Rebels had captured them. Nearly every woman was in mourning.

Although the Rebels announced that Málaga was blockaded and that mines had been placed all round the port, the commander was sceptical, and as we reached Málaga made a wide circle and came in to anchor at the usual station half a mile off the harbour entrance.

The town looked more beautiful than ever, steeped in misty sunlight, with its rim of blue hills fading into the background and, far to the north-east, the snow-clad ridge of the Sierra Nevada glistened against the blue sky. But ominous columns of smoke were rising from around the cathedral.

The day before, Málaga had had the first serious air-raid for many weeks, and the worst that it had experienced. Seven huge Italian bombers had circléd over it, in formation, raining destruction and doing more damage to property than the incendiarism of July. Many were killed and wounded, but no reprisals had been made.

The destroyer *Gallant* dropped anchor about noon, and in a few minutes a huge Government tender came alongside to take off the returning refugees. The commander, a junior officer and I went ashore in the ship's tender, with the consul's enormous mail, chiefly, as I found afterwards, parcels of provisions for residents in Málaga.

I was just a little nervous about my own reception by the police authorities, but we were landed close to the dock-gates where Clissold, the acting-consul, and one or two others were waiting to receive us. No papers were asked for and no customs examination was made.

We simply walked straight through the gates and across to the consulate. The streets were rather empty as it was the hour of the midday meal and no trams were running, but everything was quite orderly and in a few minutes I was back in my villa.

Mrs. Clissold had very kindly given warning of my arrival and I had a great welcome, found that no more damage had been done to the house and that the garden was brilliant with early spring flowers, bougainvillea and jasmine. My parcels were at least as welcome as myself, and María who had come back when she knew the Bolins had left, eagerly helped me to unpack them.

As I was soon to learn, food was becoming a really difficult problem.

I was soon having my simple meal in the open air, looking down the valley to the blue sea, in great content. Then an air-raid warning came and it was still more like old times. When I was sitting with the servants waiting, they began to ask me, shyly, if I had seen Don Tomas and the Señora and the children; and how were they all and how lucky they were to be at Gibraltar out of the troubles.

It was said without the slightest jealousy, but in simple pleasure that they were safe. Nothing came of that air-raid warning, and, presently, first the hall-porter from the Bolins' house and next the younger of the gardeners, came across on the same double mission, to welcome me back and to ask about their former masters.

The anarchists at the hospital had told them that I had taken the Bolins to Gibraltar, and bore no malice about it. Everyone in Málaga knew about it, and also knew that they had returned from Lisbon and were in Algeciras.

I had hesitated to take my gift over to the hospital until I had some evidence of their real feelings towards me.

But my mind was soon put at rest, for I was disturbed in the early afternoon by merry shouts at the foot of my garden. A plump young woman in a white overall was being pushed up the steep path by a handsome young man in a smart blue mono, his head bandaged, and he in turn by a very pretty, fully uniformed young nurse.

They were panting and laughing and when I went down to meet them, first the plump woman, who, I was told afterwards, superintended the linen, and then the pretty nurse called me by name, threw their arms round me and kissed me on each cheek. Then I was introduced to the young man who was also "Pedro," so we must be brothers.

They wanted to know why I had not gone over to see them at the hospital. I ought to see how well they were getting on and what care they had taken of the Bolins' house. As I hadn't come they had been sent "to pull me over." More laughter.

We went up through the garden, stopping at each of the terraces, admiring the flowers, and saying how beautiful it all was.

Then we went indoors and began to chat. I had tea made for them. They refused to take sugar or sweet biscuits until I told them that I had just brought some from Gibraltar and had plenty. I think then that they had about five lumps in each cup and enjoyed the biscuits.

Later we went across to the hospital, taking my little parcel. When I told the nurse what it contained, she threw her arms round my neck and gave me a much less formal kiss; the other two made merry, asked when the marriage was to take place or if we were going to wait for it. But the nurse turned on them.

"He has brought morphia," she said, "don't you know that we haven't any in the hospital?"

On the wide terrace in front of the main entrance to the mansion groups of patients were lounging in the sun. The sentinel, sitting in the entrance porch, at once rose up, came to me, shook hands, and reminded me that he was one of the two who often came to my house for meals while the hospital was being installed; and then patients, nurses, kitchen-women, typists, surged out like bees out of a hive and all welcomed "Don Pedro."

I was taken into the medical store-room where the resident surgeon opened the parcel, counted the syringes and the tubes of morphia-tablets, dictating the numbers to his secretary, watched all the time by all the patients, nurses and others who could crowd into the room. Before he locked them away, he had to take one of the syringes out of its case, show them the thin wire through the needle, the way of filling the syringe, and offered to give anyone who wished an immediate injection, when they would find out that an ear could be cut off without any pain. But there were no acceptances.

Then I was taken all over the house, shown the operating-room and the wards, the officers' rooms, the kitchens, where a chef in white coat and cap, but with the anarchist red and black badge worn as a neck-cloth (I wonder if Doña Mercedes has kept the anarchist scarf she accepted from one of the men who were helping her to store her furniture in the chapel?), told me of his difficulties and how he was overcoming them, the mess-room where the staff and those patients able to come to table, had their food together. With special pride they made me see that the doors of the chapel and of all the reserved rooms were still inviolate and how newspaper had been put over the beautiful front-stair carpet.

Late in the evening Pedro and my old friends, Roberto and Vicente, came across to my house, tapped at my study windows and were let in. The two chiefs rushed at me, embraced me, welcomed me back to Málaga and congratulated me on my having got the Bolins' out after all. Then they handed to me a formal document thanking me in the name of the "F.A.I.," for the gift of anæsthetics for the use of their wounded. It was sealed and signed, ending with the words "*Salud y Anarchia.*"

For the next three weeks I lived a quiet and almost isolated life, except for daily visits to the hospital, to chaff with the staff and chat with the patients, either in the large ward or in the garden.

Although the shops were empty my household fared quite well. Two more hampers of groceries arrived and several times the consul got some bread from the British destroyer, hunks of which were doled out by his daughter, who continued to act as his private assistant.

My servants now and again got a small loaf of something that we called bread, by waiting in a queue. We had oil and occasionally a small shell-fish which served as flavouring, or a piece of fish. Frasquita's fowls sometimes obliged with eggs and most days there was coffee.

At the end of the second fortnight of January the consul told me that the British ships were not to be permitted to bring more food parcels from Gibraltar. It was an order wholly unexpected and extremely unpleasant. Possibly, I thought, it is another effort to force the remaining British out of Málaga.

We descended towards the common level, which was privation on the borders of starvation. But we, ourselves, were far from the exact depths. When I went to say good-bye to Mrs. Clissold, she gave me some flour and sugar from the remainder of her stores, which she was distributing.

Twice the pretty nurse at the hospital, when I was leaving, brought me possibly a quarter of a pound of bread, real bread, which we shared in the villa as if it were wedding cake.

How the bulk of the population lived I don't know. The three families who were camping in my garage quite often had a pot cooking on a fire which they kept going on the concrete slab at the door. We had a good deal of rain and after every shower, men women and children hunted over the aloes down the lane at the foot of my garden and along the arroyo for snails which came out in quantities.

They told me that they made an excellent broth. I never saw any nettles near Málaga, but there were other wild plants apparently edible. Now and again a distribution of masa, or even of bread, took place. Goats gave milk and I think the kids must all have been eaten.

The town distributions of masa helped; cockles and inshore fry were sometimes to be found on the street markets.

Apparently the military authorities still had a reserve of food, for the soldiers, militia and those actually working in connection with Government received rations, and shared them with their civilian friends.

My household was never at the last extremity, for until the end I had a reserve of a 1lb. tin of corned beef, a smaller tin of sliced Russian ham, and about 1lb. of lentils. When, a few days before the capture of Málaga, the anarchists offered to put us on the strength of the hospital for rations, I was able honestly to refuse.

One of the signs of approaching events was the amount of drilling going on. Young lads, middle-aged men, elderly men, none in uniforms, very few with arms, were being marched and counter-marched in the streets forming squares, breaking into columns or squads, and, on the broken ground and steep sides of the arroyo near me, taught to make rushes from point to point, to take such cover as they might find, or to build it from stones.

The instructors were of the sergeant-major type, or rather smartly-dressed young men, clearly experienced subalterns. Among them I saw two who were, or seemed to be, Russian, the only foreigners I ever saw doing any kind of military service in Málaga, although Arthur Koestler told me that there were a senior Russian officer in an advisory capacity at the military headquarters, and four Russian aviators in the Caleta Palace hotel.

You have to think of all these events going on under an increasing accompaniment of air-raid warnings and actual air-raids. For example, from January 4 to January 23, when the consul left Málaga, only four days passed without warning signals; actually bombs fell on the town eleven times, the worst, so far as we were concerned, was when a large bomb burst on the hill a few yards beyond my olive-garden, sending a great splash of fragments

(*please turn over*)

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STAY FAIR WITH STA-BLOND

"AN accumulation of wind caused me to roll in agony for 30 hours," writes Mr. R. H. W., of W. Burton. "I was so ill that my doctor had to be sent for. The pain eased a little, but then came on again more violently. Well, I managed to get some 'Bisurated' Magnesia and got wonderful relief. I've had no trouble since." Thousands of former sufferers have shared this Burton man's experience. *One dose* of 'Bisurated' Magnesia will always relieve the agony of wind and gastric disorder. The moment it reaches the stomach, 'Bisurated' Magnesia neutralises all burning, ulcerating, gas-forming acid. Pain stops like magic; inflammation is healed, wind dispelled, and healthy digestion soon restored. Doctors everywhere use and prescribe 'Bisurated' Magnesia for the stomach. Get a bottle to-day.

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of metal and stones over my gardener's cottage and on the slight roof of my outdoor dining-room.

The worst day for the town was January 11, when two rebel warships lay off the shore and bombarded the town, especially near the port. I was having coffee in my dressing gown about half-past seven in the morning when the firing began.

I put on an overcoat and watched the ships from a corner of the terrace. The shells were passing the villa at an angle and the bombardment went on unceasingly until about 9.30. As my end of the town was not the objective I went in to finish my coffee, but the noise was incessant and I succeeded in cutting myself with a safety razor while shaving!

The damage done was very great. The trees along the promenade and a fine public fountain were badly damaged. Many houses round the club were shattered; shell-craters ten feet across and several feet deep in several streets; and a shell had landed in front of the British consulate, blocking the door and smashing the windows.

When I went to look at the damage about noon, the town was more dismal than I had ever seen it before. The shops had their shutters up; the trams were not running, the lines having been blocked in several places, and there were hardly any people in the streets.

Then some lorries passed, loaded with cheering men going to the front and, almost instantaneously, the streets filled with crowds, also cheering. As I walked home I found gangs already at work on the shell holes, stopping up severed pipes and removing debris.

It was a savage raid, directed to no military object except terrorism and wanton destruction, two of the favourite "military" objects of the Rebels. There were no Government ships in the port; no defence guns and no barracks, or other legitimate military objectives.

The bombardment was followed by an air-raid early in the afternoon. Even in the few days before the fall of Málaga, we, in the town, had no worse experience, although then we had a few night raids, the aeroplanes flying low, carrying searchlights and spraying the town with machine-guns.

So the days passed on the whole not too badly. I had no longer the responsibility of the Bolins; the hospital gave me plenty of occupation and I was making good progress with my work. Also, day by day new trees were breaking into leaf or flower, perennials waking up and annuals showing buds and flowers.

Then the consul received orders to burn all the papers and documents he could not take away, close the consulate and go to Gibraltar with all the foreigners who were willing to leave, on the *Antilope*, the destroyer then on guard off Málaga. He told me that the capture of Málaga was now a question only of a few days and urged me to come with him, saying that we could be back again in a fortnight, when Franco's people had settled in.

But I decided to stay. We had had many similar alarms which had come to nothing and this one, I hoped, might have the same event. Besides I felt sure that even if Málaga were captured, I should have nothing to fear, personally, because of the services I had done the Rights, unless it should happen that the town were taken by a disorderly rabble of Moors. Also I was so foolish as to suppose that, if the town were captured, I might do something with the new authorities to save the lives of some of my friends and neighbours.

For five days after the English abandoned Málaga, things were dismal. It rained almost without ceasing; the arroyo was a roaring torrent; every steep street opening into the main streets threw a delta of mud across the pavement and the tram lines; refugees huddled miserably in the porches and archways, drilling stopped and not even shell-fish was brought in.

Then came a terrific cyclone which blew over trees, and was followed by gusty April weather with a bright, watery sun and hurrying clouds. From everywhere people came out and began to clear away the fallen trees, partly to open up the roads, partly in quest of firewood. One man was shot by night in the Camino nuevo, but Pepe told me that the murder was due only to some private quarrel.

On the other hand, the weather brought us peace from bombing. But it was our last peace. From the day the weather changed air-raids and warnings were almost constant. Once there was a fight. A bevy of tri-motors was circling high overhead when suddenly from low down over the sea, two aeroplanes, swift as swallows, swooped upwards towards the bombers, which turned and disappeared in the north-west sky.

Machine-guns rattled and we could hear the noise of explosions quickly receding. Afterwards we heard that two Russian planes had put to flight the bombers, bringing down at least one of them. But of the two "chasers" only one came back and I was told by a man living in the Caleta Palace Hotel, that all night long the comrades of the pilot who was killed sobbed and screamed in their bedrooms over the fate of their friend.

It was the last sign of any aerial defence; the other plane must have been withdrawn and, from that time on, Italian and German planes and tri-motor bombers circled as they pleased over Málaga, sometimes singly, sometimes in formation, sometimes bombing, sometimes only scouting.

But I was far from unhappy. I was much occupied, getting on well with the arrangement of material for my book and, before I was taken from my house, I had the notes and extracts tied in bundles, the general scheme plotted out, a section here and there completed and typed in duplicate and part of the actual first chapter written.

Mr. Norton and his wife, who lived in a house about as close to the Bolins' property on the east as my house was on the west, came across, between raids, to see me and I returned their visit. They were old residents in Málaga, he having been American consul in former years, and now engaged in a large business.

I went to the hospital every day and became intimate with one or two of the patients. A badly wounded young miner told me of the conditions of life in the mines of Asturias, stories of practical slavery, with wages so low and so irregular that starvation sat on the doors of the hovels in which they lived, and often entered them.

Arthur Koestler and Gerda Grepp came up my garden path on February 3 and introduced themselves. They were war correspondents, Koestler accredited by a London newspaper, with a personal note from my friend Philip Jordan, also on the staff of that paper, the lady representing some Norwegian newspapers. They were both smartly dressed in efficient costumes for rough travelling, and had cameras, note-books and full passes from the Valencia Government and the military authorities.

Both spoke English, Gerda perfectly, and both were delightful young people. Gerda was a friend of Koestler's wife, and they had shared a car and driver lent them by the military authorities, and had been getting as close as possible to all the fronts near Málaga. They had quarters in the Caleta Palace Hotel where some of the military authorities were staying.

Gerda, as she told me in a long talk we had in my garden, was the daughter of a Norwegian Labour minister, had a university education as a student of history and economics and had travelled widely, to study the labour movement in various European countries.

Arthur was a Hungarian of good birth, but of Left sympathies, and as a journalist had always ventured as far as possible into troubled waters. He had had difficulties in his own country, but the good standing of his parents and friends had saved him from the consequences of his daring.

He had been a journalist in Germany during the rise of the Fascists to power, and Germany was no longer a healthy place for him. But his most dangerous "past" had been in Spain itself.

Soon after the outbreak of the rebellion, he had gone to Lisbon and, through his ambassador, got an introduction to Gil Robles, former leader of the reactionaries, who had left Spain, with his wife and family, at the outbreak of the rebellion, but returned afterwards under threats from Franco that if he did not come to share the risks with the others, he would be brought back and shot.

Robles gave Koestler an introduction to Queipo de Llano, and he went to Seville to have an interview with the hero of the wireless propaganda. He had the pleasure of seeing him strutting and posturing in front of the microphone, with a circle of applauding sycophants.

Koestler went back to his hotel, in which many journalists were staying. Major Luis Bolin, cousin of the man I sheltered, was in the smoking-room with them, for part of his duties on Franco's staff was to handle newspaper men. Koestler recognised an old German colleague and although he knew him to be a strong Fascist, presumed on the freemasonry of journalists and went to shake hands with him.

The German recognised him at once, drew himself up and refused to speak. In a few minutes, however, he called Bolin aside. There were a few minutes' whispered conversation and Bolin then went to the telephone. Koestler expected unpleasantness and at once went to the bureau, paid his bill and ordered a taxi to take him to the station.

In the taxi he gave another direction, and contrived to get to Algeciras and Gibraltar while Bolin's agents were seeking him elsewhere. From Gibraltar he went to Paris, where his wife was living and wrote and published in German one of the earlier illustrated books on the Spanish war, completely on the side of the legitimate Government.

(*please turn to page* 32)

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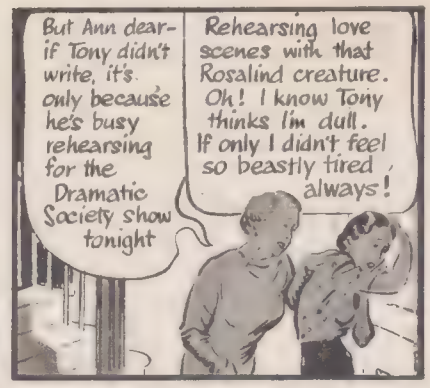

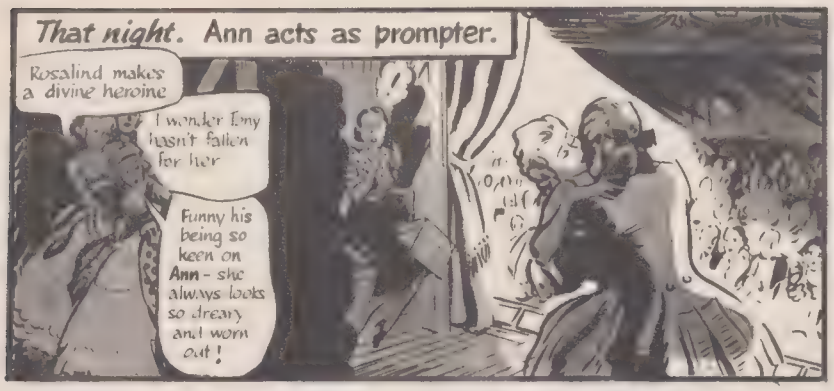

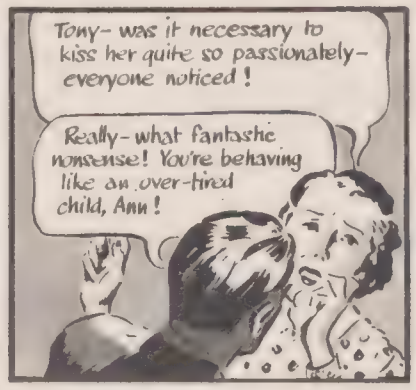

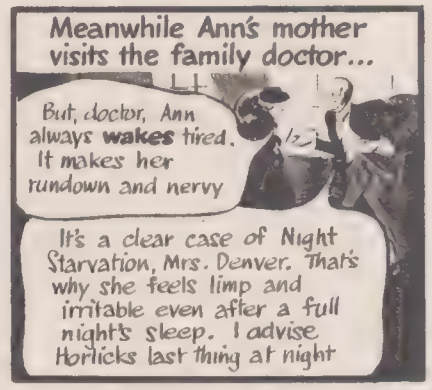

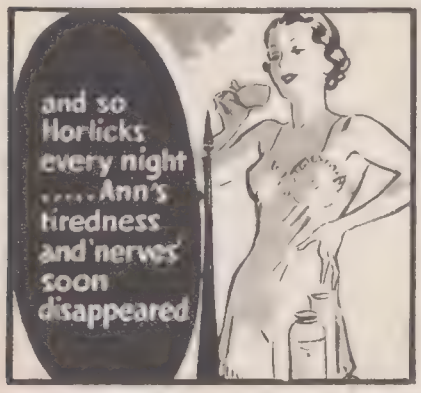

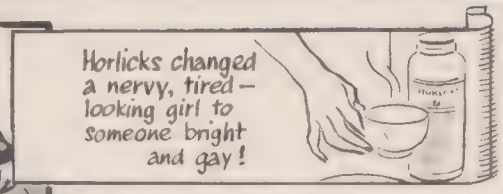

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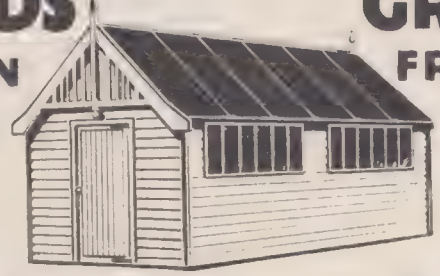

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12	7	6	8	122/6	7/6	11/1	36/6
14	7	6	8	137/6	8/-	12/6	42/-
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12	7	6	8	142/6	9/-	12/11	36/6
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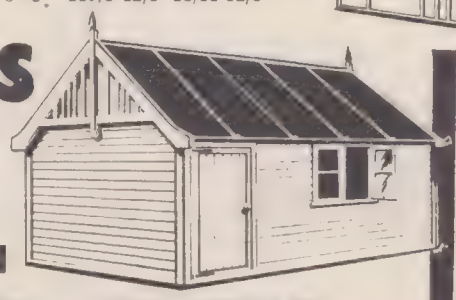

L	W	E	R	Cash	Dep.	12 Pts.	Floor extra.
4	3	5	6	25/-	2/-	2/3	6/-
6	4	5	6	40/-	4/-	3/6	10/6
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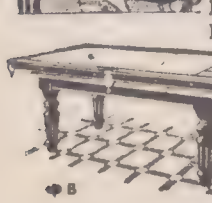

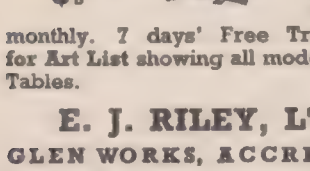

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And now, like a romantic young man and a very daring correspondent, he had come back to Spain well knowing that if he fell into Franco's hands he would be in the gravest danger, as from the point of view of Bolin any correspondent who is not wholly a partisan of the rebels is a wicked spy.

For the rest of that day and on Thursday and Friday, things seemed rather quiet. Many aeroplanes passed over, but no bombs were dropped. But I got bad news from a neighbour. Queipo de Llano was saying on the radio that he could have taken Málaga at any time, but that now he was going to do it.

Many more refugees and wounded men kept pouring into the town from the west and from the hills towards Ronda. I went up the nearest hill, from the top of which I could see up the wide valley in the direction of Alora on the road to Ronda, but saw nothing unusual.

Then three 'planes came over from the direction of Granáda rather low, and seemed to be about to pass straight over my head. Not to be conspicuous, I lay down flat between two boulders. Presently a man appeared from nowhere and ran towards me. He wore gold-rimmed glasses, was unshaven and dirty, but his suit and shoes were of good material.

He crouched down beside me; the aeroplanes passed overhead and we began to talk. He was a retired bank-agent from Ronda. Just before the rebels captured it, he had managed to send off his wife and two children. He produced his identity card and their photographs to show me.

He had heard nothing of what had happened to them. He had been tramping the hills for three days and hoped to find some way of communicating with them from Málaga. I had to tell him that no telegrams were being taken at the post office and all the telephones seemed to be cut off. He wandered off towards the town, saying he would find someone he knew. A fragment of war wreckage, broken and adrift.

Koestler and Gerda Grepp paid me a hurried visit next morning. The worst news. The only open road out of Málaga, that towards the east, was expected to be closed at Motril at any moment, if it were not yet closed, by an enemy column coming down by the Granáda-Motril road. The military chiefs were going off in a few hours, abandoning everything. They had their car; would I not come with them as there was still a very good chance of getting through to Valencia?

"No," I said. "I am in my own house living under the British flag. As the town is not going to be defended, I run no risk, unless wholly irresponsible Moorish troops come in killing and plundering."

Moreover, I had given so much assistance to the Rights and especially to the Bolins, that out of gratitude special care would be taken to save us, I added. Besides, I thought it extremely important that some responsible neutral should be in Málaga to see what really happened when the town was captured.

Then Koestler said that as a journalist he would stay too; it was his duty to take the chance of getting a full report for his paper. I told him not to be a young fool; after his experience in Seville it was mere romantic folly to run the risk of falling into Franco's hands and, in any case if there were a chance of the road being cut, or very difficult at Motril he ought not to let Gerda go alone.

After argument, it was agreed that he should go the length of Motril and decide what to do there. Gerda took photographs of us in the garden and they went back to the Caleta Palace. I said that I would come to see them off at three, and in the meantime I would write some letters for London which they would try to take through for me and air-mail from Valencia.

I saw them off just about three, another car with officers accompanying them, and returned rather sadly to the villa. But still, I was full of curiosity, without fear for myself. I settled down to my own work and just at dusk, when I went for a walk on the terrace before closing the outside shutters, I heard in the unusual stillness of the town, someone hurrying up the garden path.

It was Koestler.

He had been to Motril; it was still open and he had sent Gerda on in the car and had got a lift back, as he thought that it would be better to have two chances of getting a record of the capture of the town. But he found the Caleta Palace Hotel deserted except for one or two servants, who also were about to leave.

Would I take him in?

If so, he would go back to the hotel, collect a few belongings and see if it were possible to bring a little food. Also he thought that he might get a revolver.

To the revolver I said a final "No!" A single revolver would be no use if we were attacked, and to be found with a weapon might quite well be our death warrant. Neutral civilians had no business to have revolvers. Later in the evening, he told me that I had no notion of the sadistic cruelty of the Rights; that he wished to have a revolver, not to defend himself, but to shoot himself if he were about to be captured.

He had heard too much about the doings of the Fascists in Spain and seen too much of similar people in Germany and in Hungary to run the risk of being captured alive. I thought his fears partly romantic, partly due to the exciting day he had had and his anxiety about Gerda.

Then I remembered that I had two syringes and tubes of morphia which I had kept from the stock I brought from the hospital for emergency treatment of any of my household until surgical help could be got and, to quieten him, gave him one.

We dined sumptuously on the beggars' scraps he had brought with him, when he returned in the dark with his minute valise and we sat long into the night talking, now and again going out under the stars when we could hear no sounds from the ominously silent town

Next morning, after a good night, we broke our fast on coffee without cafein and on the rather unpleasant chemist's "porridge." All was quiet and Koestler said that he would go down to the military headquarters to see whether anyone could give him news. I went with him, advising that we should go down by the arroyo where we were more or less out of sight, but when we reached a place where we were exposed, two rifle shots came from the opposite hill, across the Camino Nuevo and a machine-gun rattled.

A little before eleven, we climbed the low hill at the back of my house and then far above it to the top of a hill from which we saw the whole town, the rim of hills and the wide valley ending in higher hills; and to the north-east the still higher mountain up which the road to Granáda twisted dreaming in brilliant sunlight.

We joined a little group who had got to the top before us; one or two civilians in working-dress, and a couple of old men. Aeroplanes began to circle between us and the hills from the point on the west where the ridge in front of Torre Molinos stretched down to the sea, right round the north and north-east to the Granáda road; 'planes in twos and threes, not dropping bombs, but scouting, in undisputed mastery of the air.

And slowly drawing nearer, all round the arc and coming down the valleys, field-guns barked, machine-guns clattered and rifles spluttered. Now and again a duller, heavier sound, as of a large shell bursting. I thought of a day years before when, in sunshine almost as bright, I lay on Vimy Ridge. But there two sides were engaged; and the ear and the eye could follow the strophe and antistrophe.

Round Málaga, over all the irregular ground, armies were advancing from every point of the compass except due south where the Mediterranean glittered (one of its shining yellow, not its blue, days) and the eastern road towards Motril.

They were advancing, fearing opposition but not finding it, covering their approach with a moving barrage lest a defence should be lurking. The curling puffs of blue smoke and white smoke and little wavering strips of lighter vapour rose into the air, clearly defined against the hills and the blue sky, as in old fashioned drawings of battle scenes.

Soon after noon we began to come down again, stopping every few yards to look back in fascinated dismay. As we came over the lower shoulder we saw the villa and the garden, bright and peaceful as ever, but also the Bolins' mansion with smoke oozing from the upper windows, no patients in the garden, the great gates closed and not a soul on the gravelled terrace in front of the portico. As we scrambled down through the olive grove Lola came running up to meet us.

"The anarchists came almost as soon as you had left, saying that they wished your car to take away patients from the hospital, but as you were out, they said they would wait. They waited until an hour ago, and then said that they couldn't wait any longer."

"Then they have taken the car?" I asked. "The garage was open."

"They said that they would not take it without asking you."

I went to the garage. The doors were open. The three families had left, in a hurry, for the remains of a fire were still smoking in the road outside. The car was there intact. I closed and locked the doors and hurried down to the terrace from which I could see the hospital. Smoke was still issuing, but only in flickering gusts, as if it were dying down; but there was no sign of human life.

The anarchists had contrived to evacuate their patients.

We ate what lunch there was and then went to the front of the house to make sure that the large Union Jack was in its place over the gate. The flag was drooping, but sufficiently visible. But the narrow lane winding down was packed close with a miserable stream.

Donkeys laden with children and bundles; old women, young women, here and there a dejected soldier, still dragging his rifle, but helping along some hobbling old woman; or with a child under his arm and a bigger child holding on to the end of his jacket.

Hurrying, pushing, groaning, screaming, faces mottled with grey and green and dull red; fear and misery turning them into one of Goya's most dreadful pictures. Goya, who saw these things more than a century ago; the dispossessed of the earth driven only by dull almost animal, instincts of flight.

We went up to the flat roof of my house. Down the Camino Nuevo, along the arroyo at the foot of the garden were similar streams, converging as they approached the Motril road and here and there we could see on one of its curves that its wide breadth was filled.

The streams went on all night, rustling and sighing like the wind in trees. And during the night, rebel warships came along, patrolling backwards and forwards, playing searchlights on the curves of the road and following the stream with shells.

At dawn, aeroplanes swooped down spraying with machine-guns. But let me be strictly accurate.

Here and there in the fleeing crowd there was an armed man, not always wounded. And was not the whole crowd "Red scum," some of whom perhaps had been camping in the cathedral and leaving it so that their rubbish had to be swept out, before Quiepo de Llano could kneel giving thanks to God for his mercies.

And perhaps also from an aeroplane, or even from the conning-tower of a ship a mile or so off, the Motril road must have appeared only like a broad stream of ants which it was amusing to interrupt here and there by a well-placed shot, watching the sudden scurry and expansion of the current and its slow reformation.

Before dusk Koestler and I sidled our way up the lane through the descending current, crossed the Camino Nuevo and climbed the high hill overlooking the harbour and the western mass of the town. On the hill we met only a single person, who stopped for a minute to tell us that all was over with Málaga. Down in the main street, along by the sea, the tram-cars were not running and, indeed, could not have found a way through the crowd hurrying eastwards.

Sitting in overcoats in the garden after dinner, we still could hear the rustling of the creeping streams, but towards midnight, high above where the Granáda road ran nearly level along the shoulder of the mountain, we saw a line, perhaps a mile long of heavy lorries halting, heard the blowing of bugles and noticed the flickering of flash-lights. It was the Italian army, resting for the night before it entered Málaga.

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I feel absolutely fit and well always, and ten years younger. My age is 36 and everybody tells me I do not look it, thanks to Silf for making me slim again. I can thoroughly recommend it and do so wherever I can. I forgot to tell you my measurements were :- Bust 42 ins., Hips 42 ins., and Waist 34 ins. Now my measurements are :-Bust 34 ins., Hips 36 ins., and Waist 25 ins., so you can see for yourself the marvellous difference. With everlasting thanks, Yours sincerely, (Sgd.) V. P."

HEALTH IMPROVES AS FAT GOES

Whether your excessive weight is Many Stones . . . or just the first few extra pounds . . . **whether you have been burdened for years or only just commenced to "put on weight" . . . the action of "SILF" Brand Obesity Tablets is just as wonderful.** It is the wise, the healthful, the SAFE way to slimness. Commence to take it to-day. You can do so with complete confidence

1/3, 3/- and 5/- Per Box

Silf BRAND OBESITY TABLETS

You Save by Purchasing the Larger Sizes.

From all Chemists or post free by sending the price to—

THE SILF CO. LTD. (Dept. 60S), 39 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.1.

No proprietary rights are claimed in the preparation of this remedy.

How Professor Polland, the celebrated dermatologist of Graz University, Austria, prescribes for

DANDRUFF

Professor Polland writes, 'Dandruff is the first sign that the hair roots are being starved of their natural food, which condition, unless checked, leads eventually to baldness. This natural food has been prepared in a convenient form—Silvikrin—and for this reason I prescribe Silvikrin in such cases.'

What Mr. Whittle is examining through the microscope—a section of the scalp showing the bulbous hair 'root' that can come right out. The real root is the fibrous growth underneath—it is this that Silvikrin nourishes.

Mr. Whittle (read his letter below) was badly troubled with dandruff and falling hair. See what a healthy head of hair he now has.

Pembroke Buildings,
2 James Street,
Cardiff.

For some time I have been troubled with dandruff and falling hair. Three days after starting a Silvikrin treatment (Silvikrin Lotion and Shampoo) the dandruff vanished. After ten days' daily massage with the lotion, my hair ceased falling, and now after three weeks' treatment I have a fine head of hair.

(signed) Thomas W. Whittle.

WHAT YOU NEED

For dandruff—hair beginning to fall. To keep the scalp healthy, strengthen the hair and bring out its natural beauty—

Ask for **SILVIKRIN LOTION**

For severe dandruff, serious falling hair, bald patches. To restore healthy new hair growth use the concentrated natural organic hair food—

Ask for **PURE SILVIKRIN**

Obtainable from all chemists, hairdressers and stores.

Silvikrin is the triumph of a great research worker, Dr. Weidner. He discovered the fourteen separate and distinct organic elements that the hair should be getting for healthy growth from the blood stream. And he succeeded in putting these up, in Silvikrin. Doctors all over the world have *proved* that Silvikrin prevents falling hair, clears up dandruff, and if the root is still alive, *actually makes hair grow.*

Look up your hair trouble in the table on the left—see what you need—and get your Silvikrin to-day!

Silvikrin DOES GROW HAIR

L-46-H

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After months of intensive effort and research, we are pleased to announce that the 1938 edition of our Handbook, **"ENGINEERING OPPORTUNITIES,"** is now out of the publishers' hands and ready for *free distribution.*

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"Bermaline" Bread. Note the delicious, fresh flavour of Best Wheaten Flour and Scotch Barley Malt.

Energy producing and easily digested, "Bermaline" is by far the best bread of all.

Try a loaf to-day!

Bermaline

THE BEST BROWN BREAD!

Stop Baby's Night Cough

Relief comes fast when you rub Vick brand Vapour-Rub on throat, chest, and back. It acts through the skin like a poultice, and, at the same time, releases medicated vapours that the child breathes in direct to the irritated air-passages. This direct double action soothes irritation, loosens phlegm, relieves the coughing, so that the child quickly falls asleep in comfort. An application of this famous cold-remedy at bed-time usually prevents night attacks of coughing.

Just rub on VICK BRAND VAPOUR-RUB

Send For BIG **FREE CATALOGUE!**

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Design S.S. For storing Tools, Garden & Household Implements, Cycles, Prams, Toys, etc. Built in 6 strong, perfect fitting sections. Easily the best value. Sent carriage paid. Roofing Felt supplied Free. (Floors extra.)

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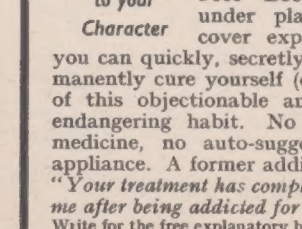

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12 ft. 8 ft.	8 ft.	£6 10 0	11/11

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F. & H. Sutcliffe, Ltd., 64 Wood Top, Hebden Bridge, Yorks. Tel: 217 London Showrooms: 40-42 Oxford Street, W.1.

WAKE UP YOUR LIVER BILE

without Calomel—and you'll jump out of bed in the morning full of vim and vigour.

The liver should pour two pints of liquid bile into your system every day. If this bile is not flowing freely, your food doesn't digest. It just decays in the bowels. Gas bloats up your stomach. You get constipated. Your whole system is poisoned and you feel sour, sunk and the world looks punk.

Laxatives help a little, but a mere bowel movement doesn't get at the cause. It takes those good old Carters Brand Little Liver Pills to get these two pints of bile flowing freely and make you feel "up and up." Harmless, gentle, yet amazing in making bile flow freely. Ask for Carters Brand Little Liver Pills. Stubbornly refuse anything else. 1/3 and 3/-.

NAIL BITING

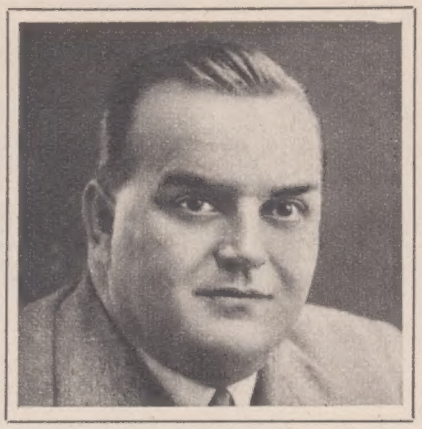
stop it!

Your Nails are the index to your Character

NEW NAILS NEXT WEEK! Amazing Discovery, Which Transforms Bitten, Disfigured Nails into Glorious Filberts in 7 Days! Free Booklet sent under plain sealed cover explains how you can quickly, secretly, and permanently cure yourself (or a child) of this objectionable and health-endangering habit. No aloes, no medicine, no auto-suggestion, no appliance. A former addict writes: *"Your treatment has completely cured me after being addicted for 20 years."* Write for the free explanatory booklet NOW enclosing 1½d. stamp for postage.

FILTEX LTD. (Dept. P.S.), 31 Broadway, Crouch End, London, N.8

NEXT WEEK



THERE'S another John Hobden story all set for next week. Remember that straight-shooting giant with his fund of wisdom and his love of living near to Nature?

Well, he's back again renewing old friendships with Longshanks, Belvedere Tipp, Molly O'Rourke and the rest of the gang. But what of his creator? Mr. L. Patrick Greene as ever was. Say, who is this Pat Greene we asked John Hobden, and in reply we received this photograph with a note saying:

"Hoped to have a new photograph to send you, but the family refuse to O.K. it. So I am sending the enclosed, which is of B.H.D. (Before Hay Diet) vintage. I append this biographical note from the Paternoster Club's Who's Who:

"Born 1891. Served in Rhodesia with the British South African Police. Seventeen at time of enlistment. Invalided out of service. Went to the U.S.A. and there held an odd assortment of jobs—day labourer, meter reader, insurance agent, share pusher (I quit this job on learning my employer was headed for prison again,) political speaker, social service worker, associate editor of an action-fiction magazine, taking over Sinclair Lewis's desk.

I have had twenty-six books published, mostly collections of short stories. Have written two boys' books—both dealing with the adventures of Trooper Useless, who is an idealised (very) presentation of my own career in Africa. Both these books were broadcast in Childrens' Hour and took a high place in the Request Week voting.

"Created a character called 'the Major' seventeen years ago and have written 122 stories of his adventures, totalling 1,500,000 words. Is this a record?

"Married. Two children—both girls, one of whom has been married for nearly two years. Makes a fellow feel old.

"Recreations: Tennis, pub crawling—not for the drinks, though they are a consideration, but for the story material which can always be found over a pint of mild—and horseback riding.'

"Will this do?"

We'll say it will.

Those also present include Sir Peter Chalmers Mitchell, Lars Moën, C. T. Stoneham, Leslie Beresford, Stephen Phillips and company.

YOU'RE TELLING US!

YOU'RE TELLING US! Half a guinea is paid for each letter or quotation printed on this page. Address: "Readers' Letters," "Passing Show," 93 Long Acre, London, W.C.2. Please state whether Mr., Mrs., or Miss

LIFE is so full of complexities that we can but admire the bewildered countrywoman who, on being asked whether the cottage to be seen next day by a prospective tenant was near a main road, replied: "Indeed no; it is most seclusive." We feel that in thus forestalling a second question with her first reply she was accomplishing much, even at the cost of inventing a word.

Would that we had her gift when faced with difficult, embarrassing problems, for did she not say that the new maid at the Hall came from the "distressed acres?"

We feel more than ever the need for her genius when faced with the letter written by Mr. J. E. J. Kitson, of Trent Vale, Stoke-on-Trent, in a hospital; a hospital for ex-servicemen where "a casual glance into any of the wards would show a very cheery crowd of patients who, to an onlooker, would appear to have nothing seriously wrong with them.

"But to one who sees them at close quarters," adds Mr. Kitson, "that is obviously far from the truth. For these ex-Tommies are still suffering from that Great War which ended twenty years ago.

"If only some of the people who now talk so glibly about another war to end war had to spend a few days among these supremely brave ex-Tommies, they would work hard for peace, knowing full well that if war did come again they might also be like these specimens of wrecked humanity who are without legs, arms, eyesight and ambitions.

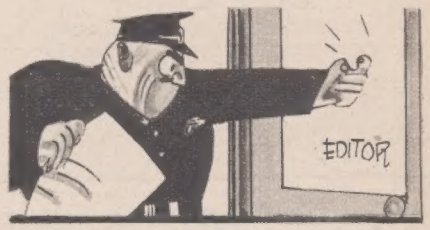
"If only they could spend but a few minutes with an isolated half-dozen men, who once went over the top with a yell, and now lie still on their backs without arms and legs, unable to hear or speak, or even see, they might at last realise what war can mean."

We offer no apology for throwing aside our cap and bells so that we might give vent to another's angry thoughts while we consider the eccentricities of a creature who will calmly support a metaphysical banshee such as fascism, socialism or transubstantiation, listening to the caterwauling of some hysterical, caparisoned madman, knowing full well that loyalty to such a cause will probably end in the butchering of millions of men, women, and children, who are still faced with the sorrows and wrecks of another such senseless blood-letting.

But as there's nothing we can do about it except apologise for not being able to tell Mr. Kitson why we go on making a pass at a war to end war, we might as well try to explain to Mr. John Menzies, of Judd Street, W.C.2, why lettuces are so expensive in England.

He complains that he must pay so dearly for miserable lettuces imported from France.

"For a time," says Mr. Menzies, "I worked at a lettuce ranch in Arizona, where on four acres of ground we grew huge quantities of 'iceberg lettuces,' popular because of their large, crisp hearts. An agent in Chicago or New York would telegraph for one or two refrigerator cars of lettuces, and from the minute the cars were shunted into our private siding



it took us just forty-five minutes to pick the lettuces, pack them in special boxes and load them into the cars.

"Mexican labour was employed and, by systematic methods, every lettuce packed was uniform in size and quality. Contact was maintained with our trucks on their way across the continent and if a cold spell fell on the city to which they were travelling, we switched the consignment to some more suitable market. We have even sent lettuces to Covent Garden—six thousand miles away."

Perhaps Mr. Menzies should try to grow lettuces in a land governed by a climate that changes its mind more rapidly and more often than a woman who wants a new hat. He should have to guard them from the slugs, lie in ambush with a shot-gun all night to keep the rabbits off and then have them stolen by the pigeons when he dashes into the wood-shed to keep the flies from settling on the demijohn of cider.

In fact, if he consulted Uncle Joe on the subject he wouldn't have the heart of a lettuce.

Meanwhile, we have taken heart. For Mr. B. Magee, of Oamaru, New Zealand, has asked us to picture the strife that developed between a local editor and the police chief when, in commenting with flowery dignity on the promotion of one of the force, the newspaper referred to him as being "a well-known member of the defective branch of the police force."

Overwhelmed with shame and protests, the editor published an apology about his reference to "the well-known member of the detective branch of the police farce." And so it went on, we suppose, until one of them gave up. But we aren't the only crew that makes mistakes, see!

For Your Amusement

CLUES ACROSS

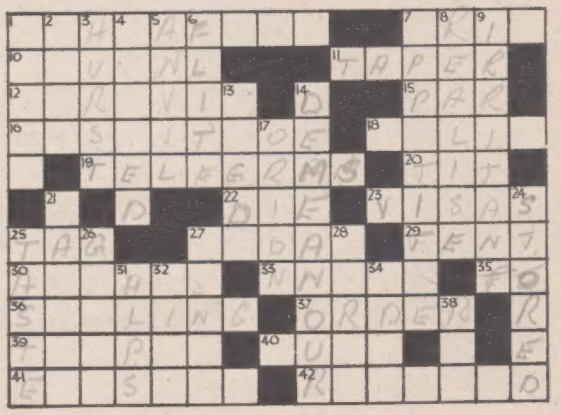
1. Of brief existence.
7. Very dry.
10. Wreath of this had honorary significance.
11. Come to a point.
12. Uncertain manner.
15. Paragraph in brief.
16. Act of ending.
18. A memorial or remnant.
19. Wired words.
20. A bit of a tit-bit.
22. End in view.
23. Travellers' warrants.
25. Possibly a label.
27. To wilt or hang.
29. A dwelling, perhaps temporary.
30. A more than 37, but much the same.
33. May attend the ailing.
35. Half tone.
36. Looking, perhaps with astonishment.
37. Stir to action.
39. An outburst.
40. Compressed snow.
41. Infinite if actually this.
42. Longed for something.

SEPARABLE PLANT
EVOLUTIONS AGO
VERDI T STAMINA
INCENSE LORELEI
L E H MARINE M
LILY BRAVEST L
E AD RARE E E
DIETIST ASPENS
TON RAPIER ALES
O AIR N TONES
GRASPS SOS ENS

Solution to last week's puzzle.

CLUES DOWN

1. Choose by preference.
2. Take off a covering.
3. Hurts for wood of our forefathers.
4. Effaced.
5. Matter for the smith.
6. Not common people.
7. Desires.
8. Understand or visualise.
9. This may annoy.
13. Tobacco here, or should be.
14. O rude name (anagram).
17. A giant among the stars.
21. Another bird.
24. Hoarded.
25. One of our senses.
26. Perhaps a plank.
27. Hollows.
28. Establish satisfactorily.
31. Far away mountains.
32. Eleven perhaps.
34. Takes proceedings.
38. An organ and one of a pair.



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P.S. GOLDEN CIRCLE 19-2-38

FAMOUS PRESCRIPTIONS that RELIEVE SUFFERING

PROMOTE HEALTH and SAVE YOU DOCTORS' BILLS

WHY BE A VICTIM OF NERVES?

Start taking these amazing little tablets now—**"Shadphos" Tonic Tablets**—one or two with meals—and in two days' time all trace of Nerves, Neurasthenia, Depression, Brain Fag, Listlessness, Fear of Failure, Irritability, Run-downness, Lack of Concentration, Boredom and general "Fed-upness" will be no more than a bad memory! **"Shadphos" Tonic Tablets** revive your interest in life and make work a real pleasure—they have enabled many a brain worker to get a long-wanted "rise." Very likely they will do the same for **you**! Absolutely harmless and equally good for men or women. Restore your zest and enthusiasm! Banish depression! Surge with new vitality! Start taking this greatest of all mind and nerve tonics **now** and leave your old jaded self behind. Ask for **"Shadphos" brand Tonic Tablets.** A proved remedy. Prices: **1/-** (12), **1/9** (25), **3/3** (50), **6/-** (100) and **17/-** (300 tablets). **Prescription 470.**

Special book dealing with Nerve Troubles (No. P.S. 323), price **2d.** *Post free.*

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RHEUMATISM

HEADACHE—SCIATICA—INFLUENZA

All Nerve Pains, including those of Neuralgia, Colds, Influenza, Headache, Sciatica, Neuritis, etc., are promptly relieved by **"Shadspro" Compound,** the new pain-killer **(No. 263).** This formula is non-purgative and does not upset the stomach. It quickly relieves pain and renders movement possible. It reduces inflammation and temperature, and kills bacteria. Prices: **6d.** (10), **1/3** (25), **2/-** (50), **3/6** (100 tablets). In exceptionally painful cases use a **Neuritis Cachet (No. 622A).** Prices: **3/-** (6), and **5/9** (12). The best external application is **"Vapour Rub"—Prescription 913.** Prices: **6d.** and **1/-.**

The Shadforth Booklet on "Neuritis" (No. P.S. 236). Price **2d.** *Post free.*

CHEST COLDS

Stop Coughing all night with the "Shadforth" Chest and Lung Tonic

One of the latest products of the Shadforth Laboratories, prescribed for common Winter Coughs, colds, and chest troubles, in adults, when Asthma and Bronchitis are absent. Gives quick relief and comfort, promotes restful nights; good for aged patients.

When mixed with sugar and water as directed, makes the World's Best Chest and Lung Tonic. **Shadforth Prescription No. 617.** Price **1/6** and **3/-** per bottle. The 1/6 bottle makes 1 pint and the 3/- bottle makes 2 pints.

The Shadforth Booklet on "How to Cure a Cough" (No. P.S. 203). Price **2d.** *Post free.*

KEEP YOUR ARTERIES YOUNG

Lower Your Blood Pressure and Take a Load Off Your Heart

Avoid Blood Pressure Breakdowns! Steady heart action co-ordinated with youth-like elastic arteries are now possible for those past their prime. The **"Shadforth" Simple Home Treatment for Arterio Sclerosis** rapidly reduces high blood pressure and tension. It gives prompt relief from palpitation, giddiness, premonitions of collapse, and sleeplessness; it leads to permanent restoration and makes you feel years younger within 20 days. Get it now. **Prescription No. 1108T.** Prices: **2/6** and **5/6.**

"How to Prevent Blood Pressure" (Book No. P.S. 342). Price **2d.** *Post free*

CHILBLAINS

Keep the body warm by exercise, friction and clothing. Don't live in hot rooms and get warm by going too near fires. Use any or all of the following—directions with each:—

Chilblain Ointment (No. 581) for unbroken Chilblains, and Chapped Hands or Lips. Price **6d.** and **1/6.**

Chilblain Tablets (No. 586K), for increasing the density of the blood. Price **10d., 1/4** and **2/1.**

Ointment for Broken Chilblains (No. 582). Price **6d.** and **1/6.**

Birch Tar Soap, for washing and stimulating the skin **(No. 930).** Price **1/-.**

The Shadforth Booklet on Chilblains (No. P.S. 325), price **2d.** *Post free.*

ALOPECIA

(Hair Falling Out in Patches)

Here is a Cream which makes hair grow on bald spots (alopecia) if promptly applied. It is an unfailing remedy in Scurf, Scaly Eczema, and Ringworm, and most cases of Psoriasis. Ask for **Alopecia Prescription No. 850.** In jars at **1/9** and **4/-.** The best soap to use in cases of Psoriasis, Hair Trouble, Scurf, and similar skin troubles is **Shadforth Birch Tar Soap (No. 930),** costs **1/-** per tablet. The best internal medicine is Potassium. Take this in the form of **Vi-Salts** (the new Potassium Table-salt) with each meal. Price **6d. Prescription No. 1250.** It nourishes the hair and prevents it going grey.

Consult Health News (No. P.S. 306) for the treatment of Hair Troubles. Price **2d.** *Post free.*

HEART TROUBLE

Prescription That Always Brings Relief

HEART DISEASE IS RARE: don't be alarmed because you suffer from palpitation or pain near the heart. If it isn't indigestion it's overstrung nerves. **The Shadforth Heart Tonic (No. 632),** popularly known as "Blue Lion" Fox Nuts, will strengthen the nerves, steady the heart, and tone up stomach and kidneys. Don't imagine yourself into an illness! Have a good rest, take the prescription, and be normal in a few days. Prices: **1/9** (50), **2/6** (72), **4/6** (144), **13/-** (432 pills). This prescription prevents palpitation, faintness, heart failure, tremblings, run-down condition, and stops your falling-to-pieces feeling. Can be taken alternately with **"Shadphos" Tonic Tablets** with advantage (see above).

The Shadforth Booklet on "Heart Trouble" (No. P.S. 320). Price **2d.** *Post free.*

BLADDER COMFORT

No More Disturbed Nights

Liver, Kidney and Bladder troubles, such as Cystitis, Prostatitis, Stricture, Incontinence, Constipation, Gall Stones, with associated Gout, Rheumatism, Sciatica, Backache, Gravel, Scalding, and constant getting up at nights are quickly relieved by the bloodless surgery of the **Shadforth "Bladder Comforter," Prescription No. 285.** Immediately, all day and all night, painlessly, secretly, and without the loss of one drop of blood or one hour of employment, they get to work. They cleanse, cool and heal. They move what is harmful. You are restored. Don't worry. Shadforth will give you prompt relief. Prices: **1/4** (25), **2/6** (50), **4/6** (100), **13/-** (300).

A special book (No. P.S. 326) on the subject by Mr. Shadforth. Price **2d.** *Post free.*

AN OILY SKIN

especially an oily face, in man or woman, quickly regains and retains its normal healthy appearance by the regular use of **Shadforth's Ox Gall Obesity Soap (Prescription No. 986).** Recommended by specialists everywhere. In Tablets at **1/3** each.

The Shadforth Booklet on "Obesity" (No. P.S. 255). Price **2d.** *Post free.*

FALSE TEETH HOLD FAST

all day long when you sprinkle on Shadforth's Dental Plate Powder **(Prescription No. 994A)** —they fit snugly—comfortably—they cannot slip. Prescribed by world's leading dentists. Price **1/-** and **2/6** per box.

HEAD COLDS

Catarrhal Congestions

An effective nasal antiseptic of the ephedrine class is now provided in **"Shadrinol."** It is packed with a pipette for applying drops in the nose or with a spray for applying to back of the mouth and throat. It quickly relieves Nasal Catarrh, Head Colds, Coryza, Hoarseness, Laryngitis (occasionally Bronchitis and Asthma) and general catarrhal congestions of the mucous membranes of nose and throat.

Complete with directions. Price **1/3 (with Pipette), 2/6 (with Pipette and Atomizer). Prescription No. 1445XL.** The best internal medicine to supplement the action of **"Shadrinol"** is **Prescription 331 — Catarrh and Cough Pills.** Prices **1/-** and **1/9.**

The Shadforth Booklet (No. P.S. 348) on this subject is supplied post free on request.

PSORIASIS

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